

The Emotional Experience of Continuing Professional Development for Social Workers

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Abstract

This study seeks to understand why some social workers seem to connect and engage openly with opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD) while others seem to have a more conflicted relationship with their learning. Using psychoanalytically informed free association narrative interviews with eight social workers, the study explores the participant's emotional experience of CPD. The data is analysed using an 'Evolved approach' (Cooper, 2014) in which it is examined for new ideas and organised into themes. The findings suggest a clear relational dimension to learning for social workers and the researcher offers The Learning Response model as a product of the study. This is a biographical narrative model of the pedagogy of CPD which offers a way of understanding how social worker's approach to CPD is influenced by the experience of learning facilitation in early life. The model suggests that for some social workers, the script for future engagement with learning is set at this stage and they will repeat their early responses in their adult learning. But the study also identifies apparent compensatory factors and experiences and these seem to enable social workers to rescript their approach to CPD. For all however, the inner emotional voice created from initial experiences remains the same and it is this which replays and shapes social worker's emotional experience of CPD.

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Introduction

I have been a social worker for three decades. I have worked in social work practice and management within local authority and voluntary sector services but I am also a teacher and have spent twelve years teaching social work as a university lecturer, including leading on a level 7 CPD programme. I like learning and am drawn to experts for their confidence in their subject and their ability to focus on what matters to them whilst spotting its wider applicability. My decision to study for a doctorate was made whilst teaching at The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust and was largely a response to a desire to develop my own knowledge and confidence in the area that has become my particular interest; that of social worker's responses to continual professional development (CPD).

As an educator, I have seen social workers respond in very different ways to the invitation to learn and have been curious about ***why some CPD candidates connect and engage with offered learning while others remain less affected or even seemingly untouched by the experience***. This question was always important to me as an educator, looking to understand the variety in response amongst different students to the same session. But during the course of my research, I left my teaching role and took up my current position as Principal Social Worker (PSW) within a local authority where I am responsible for the quality of practice across the adult care service. My question is entirely applicable to this role. Although my local authority is known for its generous learning offer, courses are not always fully booked, non-attendance is an issue and I have found no reliable way of understanding to what extent social workers are genuinely engaging with the learning or what determines this level of engagement. Social workers are busy and time is at a premium. In my workplace, it is common to see social workers with laptops open, writing emails during training sessions. Despite CPD being a requirement of professional registration, any that goes beyond acquisition of essential knowledge can be seen as a luxury. But whilst some social workers restrict their activity to the essential minimum, others do manage to carve out space and time to learn beyond the basic at work and some are willing to give their own time and resource to their development. I wanted to understand what it is about our responses to shared pressures that can be so different.

My experience as a teacher and trainer adds little enlightenment. The 'happy sheet' course evaluations that delegates are routinely asked to complete seemed to me to be limited in their use. On one course that I taught approximately 100 times over five years, I would finish the session with every delegate winning a small Freddo chocolate bar. Without exception, of the 1500+ people who took this course, everyone scored it highly on the evaluation sheet. Whilst it may be that I am an exemplary trainer, it is likely that the chocolate influenced the responses by setting a celebratory mood as each delegate won a gift. This limited the reliability of the evaluation sheet as a method for understanding course impact on knowledge development and informed my hunch that genuine evaluations of models of CPD are a challenge and it is difficult to separate out how much impact is due to the skills of the teacher or the format of the course and how much is actually about the candidate's state of

mind. So a 'happy sheet' might say more about the feelings of the person completing it than the course they have just attended. My research has borne out this hunch and taken my thinking a stage further to suggest it is not just current state of mind, such as chocolate-fuelled happiness that impacts engagement but unconscious recourse to previous experiences of learning. The implication of this for educators and employers is that much of the preparation necessary for successful learning will have happened long before the social worker enters the classroom.

The answer to my question about connection and engagement was to some extent, obvious; each student brings individual professional and personal experience and will be looking for different things. Some get what they hoped, others will be disappointed. The learning process is affected by our emotion. But this isn't as simple as positive emotions making it easier to learn and negative emotions making it harder (Hascher, 2010). Difficult and uncomfortable experiences can lead to significant learning but each of us will have different capacity to connect with this learning state of mind.

There is little literature on the effectiveness of CPD. McWilliam's (2002) comparison between academic development programmes and third world (sic) development programmes argues that professional development is privileged over disciplinary knowledge, 'the knowledge presumed to be relevant to the development of professional workers can undermine worthwhile local and context sensitive knowledge' (McWilliam, 2002, p. 1).

But generally, CPD is seen to be of value (Schostak et al., 2010). The previous registering body for social work, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), required social workers to undertake regular CPD but was non-prescriptive about what this meant. It stipulated only that different learning activities must be used and the benefit to practice and people experiencing that practice must be considered. The new registering body is clearer about the required outcomes for CPD (SWE, 2019). Social Work England¹ (SWE) describes CPD as 'the reflection and learning activities which social workers undertake and record throughout their career to improve their practice and keep it up to date' (SWE, 2019). CPD requirements for registration are for social workers to upload evidence of CPD and reflection on learning to SWE, showing how CPD

- incorporates feedback from people who have experience of social work practice
- evidences of use of reflective supervision, theory and research
- demonstrates subject knowledge
- contributes to learning culture
- reflects on own development, values and impact of practice
- records learning

The learning activity is not defined and can mean anything that has enabled the social worker to build upon their skills, knowledge and understanding. This might include a radio programme, blog, book, article, short course or workshop. It might mean a longer course leading to a specific qualification such as a Practice Educator or an extended learning opportunity such as master's modules or the doctoral programme in which I am engaged.

¹ the new professional registering body for social workers

Skills for Care link CPD to the professional capabilities framework for social workers (BASW, 2018) and propose models such as 'benefit realisation' and 'logic' (Skills for Care) in which impact is measured against objectives and outcomes. The former charts anticipated benefits of learning and the journey needed to achieve these and the latter identifies required resources, activities undertaken and changes established. The idea is that learning need can be identified and articulated, resources allocated and subsequent benefits of the learning can be assessed. The assumption is that if the right resources are made available, the candidate will learn and achieve desired changes.

My original hypothesis was that the linear nature of 'logic' or 'benefit realisation' is unrealistic as there are complex emotions at play in learning that impact success or lack thereof. Put simply, if a social worker had a dreadful time at school and distrusts teachers, is there value in expecting them to attend a class? My hypothesis was closer to the mark than anticipated as each of the interviewees chose to speak about their early experiences of education but also about their homes and family. This suggests, as will be shown, that early experience of learning continues to have impact on our approach to learning later in life. So, the simplistic approach of the right resources leading to the right learning fails to take account of the true complexity of the learning process. The research presented here develops our understanding of social workers' experiences of CPD and considers how these experiences might impact social worker's capacity to engage with learning however well-resourced the offer.

Webster-Wright (2009) asked for more research to understand the experience of professional learning within a work context and the SWE database with uploaded accounts of CPD will have the potential to offer powerful insight into what social workers in England consider CPD to be and how they feel it has impacted them. It will be interesting to see whether there is any difference in perception between training courses that aim to 'deliver knowledge' and broader learning experiences in which learning and development is either encountered or actively sought. But my study sought to take understanding a stage further; not restricting its gaze to what is happening in the classroom or workplace but examining what might be happening emotionally that impacts ability to learn.

Price's (2001) study of the emotional processes in an infant school classroom presents object relations theory as an explanation of the unconscious states of mind that underpin all learning. The 'objects' of object relations are either the important people (normally parents or main care giver) to whom we relate, or a physical but symbolically significant part of them such as the mother's breast. The need to form relationships is seen as the main motivation for the development of human behaviour but our ability to do this is shaped by early relationships with primary caregivers which are experienced through a child's apparently simplistic lens of love or hate and physis representation of instinct or 'unconscious phantasy' (Ogden, 1984). A baby wants to get rid of its bad experiences and internalise the good ones so splitting the mother into a good and bad object means unwanted aspects of self can be projected into the mother. This projective identification can defend us from the 'bad' aspects of ourselves. But it can also create a good/bad relational positioning for the object/mother/breast. The relational blueprint this establishes can drive the internal object that shapes the experience of other relationships. Klein called this process of splitting and

projection the 'paranoid schizoid' position but it is in the 'depressive' position that we can recognise 'good' and 'bad' to be two parts part of the same whole. A Kleinian view would suggest we unconsciously oscillate between paranoid schizoid and depressive positions throughout life (Bower, 2005, p. 11). Bion's (1984) 'containment' develops this thinking offering a process through which unmanageable feelings can be projected onto another who returns them in a more emotionally palatable form. Where effective containment is available in early life, a person is likely to be well equipped to develop thinking and manage emotion but where this has been missing, emotional development might be interrupted. The need for containment and the experience at times of uncontrollable emotion continues throughout life.

This relational frame is helpful in considering how emotional experience can be driven by conscious but also unconscious factors. It is these that my study explored as it shows how emotional conditions impact social worker's ability to engage with CPD. It confirms that whether CPD is delivered or sought, social worker's engagement with their learning is shaped by their state of mind. In other words, by social worker's emotional experience of CPD.

My study asked the following three questions

1. How do biographical influences affect our approach to CPD?
2. What internal conditions appear to impact our ability to engage with CPD?
3. How does it feel to learn?

My original Question 3 had been

- What impact do social workers think CPD has on their practice?

But my question changed between the original on-line questionnaire and the designing of the interview question. This is partly because the question is problematic; it is difficult for individuals to pinpoint where their development in thinking has come from. The fact of signing up for a course is suggestion of a need to develop understanding in this area. It may be that a social worker finds themselves on the lookout for relevant information/understanding so without even embarking on the course, the development might begin. Similarly, candidates often say networking with others on the course was the real benefit but it is hard to unpick to what extent the environment created by the course enabled the fruitful networking discussions and how much this would have happened anyway. So, although this is an important question, it directs thinking more towards the complexity of impact and away from my own interest in a subjective, inner world (which can serve as a scaffold to answering the question of impact). The question of how it feels to learn is my attempt to understand what is going on emotionally as our understanding expands.

These questions are not just fascinating for me; they are important for social work as they invite the profession to look beyond the performance of the teacher and the course to understand what influences social worker's ability to gain the most possible from CPD. The data produced by this study suggests our early experiences, be they facilitating or non-facilitating of learning, form an internal voice that stays with us into adulthood and continues to influence our emotional approach to learning. So, if we enjoyed learning in

childhood and trusted the person teaching us, this dynamic is likely to have repeated into adulthood. If, however our experience of learning was difficult for whatever reason, this difficulty will still have its impact now. This relational dimension might for example, repel us from the vulnerability of a learning situation or it might encourage us to rescript our relationship with learning, perhaps resulting in an enthusiastic or hungry approach to development. For the latter to occur, this research suggests the presence of a compensatory factor; a positive experience that alters the learning trajectory and enables us to trust and engage in the process of learning. Whether early learning experiences are repeated or rescripted, this research suggests the emotional experience of learning remains the same and continues to be replayed throughout our learning lives.

This paves the way for the answer to the third question; the way it feels to learn is the same as it felt when learning in the early years; so where learning patterns were established in a predominantly safe and encouraging environment, these positive feelings about learning remain present as adults. But where learning was intimidating or frustrating, these feelings are also replayed in adult learning.

For anyone influenced by psychoanalytic thinking, the idea that one's early experiences might influence the present will not be surprising. The influence of object relations thinking is apparent in the presentation of people carrying a history of learning relationships within them. But if my planning for this project assumed a psychoanalytic lens, the data drove me to a psychosocial stance. Psychosocial research seeks to understand 'both the inner and outer world of its subjects by combining specific interviewing techniques with a conceptual framework that draws on psychoanalytic concepts with a particular emphasis on the unconscious' (Russell et al., 2016, p. 204). It explores the experiential dimension of social issues by placing emotional experience within the context of the sociological. For this study, the sociological phenomena of racism as experienced by Jackie and class as experienced by Tina are as influential as the supportive internal voices offered to Jackie by her parents and to Tina by her husband. A psychosocial position prevents one from being separated from the other so the internal experience of supportive parents is not separated from the external reality of a racist society. The two come together to form a psychosocial response. Because both internal and external worlds are subject to shift and change, a psychosocial view is necessarily contextual and dynamic, recognising the evolving state of being and response.

This study's unique contribution is its presentation of how their psychosocial experience impacts social worker's relationship with CPD and the suggestion that early psychosocial learning experiences form an internal, influencing voice that are replayed through adult learning.

My research is presented here in five chapters. Chapter one offers a literature review that gives a brief overview of the major pedagogical influences on social work education and CPD and then looks to the social work literature for previous exploration into emotional experience of learning for social workers. Chapter two presents the research plan but first, it explains the paradigm through which this research is offered by situating my study within a critical realist ontology and a constructivist epistemology. It also introduces the psychoanalytically informed Free Association Narrative Interviewing (FANI) model which

influenced the interview design. Chapter three walks the reader through the method of data collection and analysis. It also introduces the on-line questionnaire which was completed by 68 social workers and was instrumental in both recruiting research participants and designing the interview question. Although not central to the study, the quality of data gleaned from the questionnaire exceeded expectation and is presented within the appendix of this paper. Chapter four introduces the interview participants through a series of pen pictures and then poses the three main research questions to their data.

Chapter five highlights conclusions drawn from the data and presents the Learning Response model which has been drawn from the data. This is a biographical narrative model of the pedagogy of CPD. It offers a way of understanding how social worker's approach to CPD is influenced by the experience of learning facilitation in early life. This experience would have been shaped by early education but also by family, cultural and social influences. For some social workers, the script for future engagement with learning is set at this stage and they will repeat their early responses in their adult learning. But there are also apparent compensatory factors and experiences and these seem to enable social workers to rescript their approach to CPD. But the inner emotional voice created from initial experiences remains the same and it is this which replays and shapes social worker's emotional experience of CPD.

Chapter one; Learning from Literature

This chapter gives an overview of the prominent pedagogies and the pedagogues whose ideas shaped modern thinking about learning. It looks briefly at journal literature to understand how these ideas continue to influence the way CPD is understood now. The main body of the review is a search through the literature on CPD for social workers to see how existing writing might answer my questions about the emotional experience of CPD for social workers. My search found that whilst there is a rich body of literature exploring conscious pressures experienced by social workers, there is little to address unconscious processes so this chapter concludes by looking to the psychoanalytical literature for understanding of what might be happening beneath the surface for social workers as they address their CPD.

Pedagogies and Pedagogues

The main pedagogical approaches can be grouped under categories of Behaviourism, Constructivism, Social Constructivism, and Liberationism (TES, 2018).

Behaviourism might be thought of as a traditional teaching style that presents the teacher as the authority within the classroom. Clear objectives, activity and repetition are integral to the approach and learning is a (measurable) behaviour that results in the presentation of acquisition of knowledge. Skinner's behavioural theory of operant conditioning (Delprato & Midgley, 1992) aims to predict and control through consequences (reinforcements or punishments), which make it more or less likely that the behaviour will occur again. For Skinner, the mind is a 'black box'. Internal processes have no influence so the response to stimulus can be observed and measured quantitatively. Behaviourist influences appear regularly in schools through sticker reward charts and fixed responses to troubling behaviours. They extend to adult learning with lecture-based classes and repetitive e-learning programmes that test for the learner's ability to regurgitate the presented facts. Behaviourist pedagogies are limited by their failure to develop independent, collaborative or divergent thinking.

For behaviourists, it is the teacher who creates and maintains the conditions for learning but for constructivists, this responsibility lies with the student. Learning is intrinsically connected to a student's experience thus far and understanding is constructed as a result of real-life observations and experiences. It was Dewey (1897) who first steered education away from the idea of filling students' heads with knowledge towards recognition of student's need to learn how to think, to create their own knowledge and to relate what happens in the classroom to real world experiences. For Dewey, it is the synthesis of learning and experience that creates the conditions for developing knowledge and understanding. Dewey saw teachers as facilitators, guiding students as they experience and interact with their environments. His ideas remain influential today as they can be seen in problem solving and inquiry-based approaches to learning such as case studies, that acknowledge and value students' experiences.

Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) (Eun, 2019) marks the beginning of social constructivism or the development of knowledge through social discourse, negotiation and the influence of culture. The ZPD is the difference between what an individual can learn on their own and what they can learn if given some help. Vygotsky influenced Lave's (1991) understanding about learning as a social process and his introduction of 'communities of practice'. These communities build upon the idea of 'situated learning' in which context becomes key. Beginners or 'newcomers' join the periphery of their community, learning the socially negotiated meaning of behaviours but in time, move to the centre as experienced 'oldtimers' (Lave & Wenger, 1999). Learning happens through the development of relationships within the community. This is a helpful way of understanding the social worker's journey through placement and subsequent post qualifying career as they become more established within their own teams or indeed in the wider community of social work but it is often that original relationship with their tutor or practice educator and the emotions this produces that can have the most lasting effect on new social workers.

Schon's (1984) model of experiential reflection highlights the need for practice theory as well as practice experience and knowledge. So Schon's use of a case study discussion would include application of a theoretical frame. Kolb and Kolb (2005, p. 194), summarise experiential learning as a process in which beliefs and ideas are examined and tested. The learning process is driven by conflict, disagreements and differences and in sharp contrast to Skinner's behavioural rejection of dualism, experiential learning requires 'thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving'. In other words, integration of the whole person. Experiential learning is 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' Kolb (cited in *ibid*). Kolb's cyclical process of reflection structures thinking by identifying an experience then reviewing, questioning and re-constructing it so knowledge is created by learning from and testing experiences in new situations. Kolb's model and Dewey and Schon's ideas about basing learning on real world experience feature heavily in social work education with its emphasis on practice placements, reflective analysis and supervision.

Critical pedagogue Freire (1972) has his roots in constructivism but his liberationist pedagogy situates education within a political and ideological context and seeks social change. For Freire, education cannot be neutral and all decisions about curriculum, methods and policies imply ideological choice. The introduction of service user and carer involvement to social work education (Hatton, 2017) can be seen as an example of liberationist pedagogy in action. Freire's thinking has influence on the widening participation approach to social work education in which efforts are made to create a workforce that better represents the people it supports but it also offers a cautionary message to a UK social work curriculum that is largely shaped by expectations of central government and to the new social work apprenticeships where guiding standards and assessments are designed by employers. Like Dewey, Freire rejects the idea of teachers 'banking' knowledge in students, instead seeking a praxis as a combination of reflection and action for students to recognise and understand oppression.

If Freire's roots are in constructivism, his head is in humanism. Teaching and learning are symbiotic and teachers must invest of themselves in order to create the relationship needed

for genuine learning which is the creation of knowledge between the two parties. For Humanist therapist Rogers (2001), this is evident. Rogers repudiates any notion of teachers instructing students in what they should know or think. His interest is in facilitating students to learn how to learn and it is the relationship between the facilitator and the learner that is of interest to him. Just as within a Rogerian psychotherapeutic relationship, authenticity, valuing, acceptance and empathic understanding of the learner are essential attributes of the facilitator's approach.

The Pedagogy of CPD

Andragogy is the theory of teaching as applied to adults (Knowles, 1980). It is based upon the assumptions that (i) adults are more mature than children so should direct their own learning (ii) adults have a vast array of experiences to draw upon (iii) and are ready to learn (iv) adults are looking for practical solutions (v) and are driven by internal motivation rather than external awards or grades. Knowles' ideas have been critiqued (Blondy, 2007) both for lack of empirical support and because some of his suggestions for adult education would apply equally to children. But his ideas about self-directed learning are seen to be helpful and the concept of adult learning remains prevalent. It is the concept of heutagogy however, or the theory of self-determination, with its emphasis on autonomy and development of capacity (Blaschke, 2012) that has particular resonance for the approaches to CPD mentioned here.

Within the field of CPD, dominating ideas include Mezirow's Transformative learning (Lundgren & Poell, 2016), which develops critical thinking by using 'disorienting dilemmas' to challenge assumptions and beliefs about the world. Keller's 'Motivation, Volition and Performance' model (Keller, 2008) presents motivation for learning as multi-faceted and dynamic and Lave and Wenger's 'Communities of Practice' (Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1998) which have now developed from real-world practice communities to on-line communities such as the social work community of practice on Twitter and can create a significant contribution to CPD.

Despite a lack of evidence of efficacy (Coffield, Moseley, Hall, & Ecclestone, 2004), learning styles have remained a dominating educational concept. Perhaps the most widely applied and frequently cited within the context of social work Practice Education, is Honey and Mumford's (1986) learning styles questionnaire. This was taught uncritically on the Practice Educator course I completed in 2016 and despite caution with regard to the need for supporting evidence, continues to feature in social work education texts (Bogg & Challis, 2016, pp. 139-142; Field, Jasper, & Littler, 2016, pp. 178-181; Williams & Rutter, 2019, pp. 66-68). Although 'intuitively appealing' (Kirschner, 2017, p. 167), this and other learning style models are critiqued for the lack of supporting evidence, the assumption that a preference for a learning approach leads to better learning and the conclusion that a preference is the same as a style.

Within the pedagogical literature, CPD is presented as either formal (acquired within an educational setting), non-formal (learning within the workplace) or informal (learning through literature and life experience (Puteh, Kaliannan, & Alam, 2015). The common

denominator in the differing theoretical and practical interpretations of CPD is that it is practice aimed at development beyond initial training (Collin, Van der Heijden, & Lewis, 2012). With echoes of Dewey, Webster-Wright (2009) criticises objectivist epistemology in which an expert can 'top up' a learner's knowledge and calls for a shift from 'professional development' to 'professional learning'. The changing terminology, at least as far as the literature is concerned, is subsequently acknowledged (O'Brien & Jones, 2014) but is yet to become a dominant presentation in practice. Certainly, in social work, both the outgoing and incoming regulators refer to and require demonstration of 'development' activities, framing learning as a measurable behaviour. But new knowledge can't simply be placed in one's head; there are relational elements such as context, opportunity and application to consider (Boud & Hager, 2012) the learner is in an active role; they bring themselves and their experiences to the learning and my study suggests this is a dominating factor.

Cheetham and Chiver's (2001) influential study on workplace learning finds professionals learn in a variety of informal, incidental ways with little organised activity. They present a range of CPD learning activities including practice and repetition, reflection, copying, feedback, osmosis and collaboration. The range of activities highlights the continual and fluid nature of learning but does not explain what might make different activities resonate for different professionals.

Eraut (2004) is interested in opportunistic, informal learning that does not involve a teacher. He values workplace learning from tasks, decision making and problem solving. Eraut notes the over-simplification of learning (perhaps as exemplified in 'Logic' and 'Benefit realisation' models) by defining rather than living problems. For Eraut, definition denies the complexity implicit in workplace reality. His study looks at how professionals learn, concluding that live experiences such as working alongside others, tackling difficult tasks and working with clients are key but he also notes the need to make relationships with others and the importance of confidence and commitment to the learning process. Constructivist, social constructivist and humanist influences are apparent here and Eraut acknowledges the emotional processes of my interest but he stops short of looking further beneath the surface to explore the source of this confidence and commitment.

The shadows of the influential pedagogues are evident in these CPD discussions. Dewey's call for connection of learning with real world experiences shapes the emphasis on workplace learning and Freire's assertion that ideology is played out through curriculum is a cautionary note in the lean towards demonstrable, accountable learning where evidence of course attendance is seen to be evidence of having learned.

If these approaches focus on external rather than the internal processes of my interest, there is some acknowledgement in the CPD literature that previous negative emotions can make it difficult for students to risk opening themselves up to new learning (Shuck, Albornoz, & Winberg, 2013). Hughes and Pengelly (1995) consider the idealisation and denigration of a course in terms of the internal discord involved in learning something new; a will to learn might conflict with awareness of likely discomfort caused by casting aside existing assumptions to be able to learn. These thoughts are helpful in my thinking about social workers' differing attitudes to CPD.

Social work CPD literature

Asano's (2019) interviews and focus groups with 26 experienced Japanese social workers found a gap between the CPD social workers felt they should be doing and that supported by their employer. He references Friedman and Phillip's (2004) study of thirty professionals for general understanding of what CPD might mean. Primarily, professionals said they saw CPD as a means of maintaining competence and keeping up with change. More than half said they would seek CPD even if it were not a requirement of their profession. But the prospect of recording and accounting for CPD was seen by professionals as surveillance and an undermining of the autonomy of a professional. SWE are at time of writing, piloting their new approach to accounting for CPD which includes uploading a record and reflective account of CPD activity to the SWE website. It remains to be seen how social workers will respond to this additional administrative task but it is likely to add to the presentation of CPD as a quantifiable activity. Asano notes the considerable resources that have been invested into the social work CPD industry intimating that if we create the right external conditions and present the right information, professional development will take place. My research suggests this is only part of the story as internal conditions are as influential as external conditions so my literature search was specifically for emotional processes that cannot be industrialised but will have powerful influence over a social worker's capacity to engage.

I previously searched the social work literature for understanding of the emotional processes of social work qualifying courses (Moore, 2017) and found a helpful picture of the emotional toll of the training. Acquiring new thinking entails elements of uncertainty and 'not knowing' and there is acknowledgement that this in itself causes anxiety for students (Ruch, 2000) but whilst the literature highlighted emotions explicitly raised by the experiences encountered on the courses, it did not explore the unconscious drivers for these emotions nor did it explain how more hidden experiences can impact on student reactions and experience.

Similarly, exploration of unconscious drivers for the emotional experience of CPD is limited in the social work literature. My search was on the SocIndex, PsycInfo and Education Source databases. I used the terms 'social worker' and 'training' and 'experience'. This gave 1,092 results so I tried 'social work' and 'CPD'. This gave 47 results which I examined. I also tried 'social workers', 'experience', 'post qualifying' and 'training'. This gave 22 results which I examined. I found two papers from a hand search of Journal of Social Work Practice (chosen in the expectation of a relationship-based understanding). I excluded papers that weren't about social work CPD. In total, I reviewed 17 papers by reading firstly for general themes and then reading again whilst looking for answers to my three research questions.

The papers give a disheartening image of overstretched practitioners trying to fit in CPD but finding themselves largely unsupported by their own work teams. In their questionnaire-based study of 35 social workers registered for a CPD programme, Cooper and Rixon (2001) find the success of a social worker's engagement with their CPD study depends just as much on the attitude of the manager and culture of the team as on the individual worker. Provision of nurturing support through mentoring (mentioned by 76%) or group study

(mentioned by 71%) is highly valued. Only 37% agree that it is an individual social worker's responsibility to undertake CPD and 94% said it was their employer's responsibility to provide CPD. This may be a suggestion of a need to feel looked after and raises questions about why some social workers do assume responsibility for their own development but also why so many social workers leave this with their employer.

Mitchell's (2001) mixed method (23 questionnaires and five interviews) collaborative study of CPD candidates, their managers and employers finds organisational culture is significant in influencing learning's impact on practice. CPD is found to be most effective where candidates are encouraged to use their learning to lead on practice, in other words where organisations would 'harness not stifle individual motivation to make sure it has impact back in the organisation' (Mitchell, 2001, p. 439). Mitchell finds some correlation between practical applicability, motivation and enjoyment so not surprisingly, those there 'for the bit of paper' but unable to connect the learning to their practice were more likely to make negative comments about the course. The concern must be that this leads to the approach of the learning organisations described by Beddoe (2009) in which learning is effectively prescribed by the organisation, leaving little room for new thought. Indeed, there is suggestion of this as one manager in the study said applicability to practice was the only basis upon which they would support an application for CPD.

Channer and Doel's (2009) semi structured interviews with five black women studying on post qualifying courses also highlight the importance of organisational culture and attitudes of colleagues and note that personal determination was essential for completion. The group describes the additional pressures faced by them as black women; for some it was the isolation of being either alone or in a small minority of black students on the course. For others, it is the pressure of being seen to be 'expert' in matters of race or the emotional burden of hearing black families described in terms of deficits.

'Well you know it's such an explosive thing. Some people are quite sensitive and being round when they brought racism up and people used to cry and therefore you at times you did not know whether you were going to traumatise another lot! So sometimes you put the box up and they don't want to know after that so you did not know whether to bring it up again. It's difficult to know how to approach it. You know it needs approaching.' (Channer & Doel, 2009, p. 407)

Candidates talk about their determination to get to the course finishing line and offer practical suggestions such as advance discussions with university and line manager, ensuring groups have more than one black candidate participating and regular review of course content to ensure its relevance in terms of race were offered.

Cooper and Rixon's (2001) questionnaire-based study of 35 CPD students suggests that giving students choice about the gender or cultural heritage of their study mentor would have been helpful. As in Mitchell (2001) and Channer and Doel (2009), the culture and attitude of work teams had significant impact. This was partly about availability of resources but also about support from line managers and collaboration between the manager and university. This desire for learning to be seen and supported by an empathetic figure also features in my own research.

Sobiechowska and Maisch (2007) write as university lecturers reflecting on ten years of teaching on a social work CPD course. Their attempt to offer CPD through a model of autonomous, self-directed, self-motivated learners had to be revised in the light of their students' experiences as demands of practice and family took priority over allocated study time, lack of study deadlines made it even more difficult for students to prioritise study over work and students found difficulty engaging with the learning-from-experience element of the course. It is easy to imagine how this might be the case; for working parents/carers, the sense that one's time is not one's own will always make it difficult to prioritise a 'non-essential' activity. The lack of structure offered by autonomy creates a barrier to learning but students also feel that learning from experience is not real learning and they ask for assignment deadlines to be installed to offer structure. In this case, the learning model is adjusted, and the tutor-led model reinstated to offer a more traditional teaching as well as facilitating role. It is noteworthy that the original MA cohort found the autonomy model easier to navigate but it does seem relevant that this cohort was made up of experienced educators. As readers, we have no way of knowing about the early learning experiences of the subsequent cohorts but if members of the first cohort all reacted to their early experiences of learning by choosing education as a career, it may be they were already unconsciously predisposed to trusting this new way of learning so found it easier to adapt.

CPD candidates want to improve their knowledge base and its applicability to practice (Postle, Edwards, Moon, Rumsey, & Thomas, 2002; Rushton & Martyn, 1990) but they also want to extend their critical thinking and ability to reflect (Mitchell, 2001; Brown, McCloskey, Galpin, Keen, & Immins, 2008; Masson, Frost, & Parton, 2008; Keys, 2016). For some, this is about career progression (Mitchell, 2001; Masson et al, 2008; Channer and Doel, 2009), the chance to reassess their role (Brown et al., 2008) or to 'recharge their batteries' (Masson et al., 2008). Candidates might be amassing credits towards a degree (C. Taylor, 1999), or seeking self-validation, informed feedback, and exposure to a wider range of views (Rushton & Martyn, 1990). Whatever the motivation, Manthorpe and Moriarty's (2014) scoping review confirms research among candidates consistently shows they think practice is improved by CPD and there is consensus in the literature that CPD brings increased confidence (Rushton and Martyn 1990; Mitchell 2001; Preston-Shoot, 2003; Masson et al, 2008; Brown et al, 2008; Keys 2016).

Not surprisingly, practicalities such as finance, resources, time, secondment, study leave, employer support, geographical distance, dependents, workload relief and work back- fill have a significant impact on candidates' experiences (Rushton and Martyn 1990; Taylor, 1999; Mitchell 2001). So does quality of training, applicability to practice, supervision, mentoring, peer support and connection to career progression (Pearce, Swift, & Figgett, 2013). In the case of international students, housing, transport, language and acclimatisation to new culture (Sims, 2012) also impact significantly on CPD experience.

CPD costs family time, (particularly an issue for women) and money (Mitchell, 2001). For women, family and work demands take precedence over professional development (Sobiechowska & Maisch, 2007). None of the papers examined suggest why, given this, candidates have chosen to study 'now' as opposed to any other time (except where directed by their employer).

Beddoe's (2009) 'learning organisation' does not recognise the importance of staff learning how to think and suggests that whereas workers might seek 'intellectual refreshment' from CPD, managers seek economic value. Organisations impose learning determined by managerial needs onto staff and this can result in organisations only learning what they already know. Kroll (2004) sees this in relational terms; tension between employer's desire for staff to develop and their fear of staff bringing new thinking that will get in the way of compliance and targets.

Isolation and anxiety also feature in Key's (2016) reflections on an on-line MA. Her study involves 18 written questionnaires and six follow-up phone calls to students who completed an on-line course in child protection. Students report experiences of isolation and anxiety some of which would have been caused by the nature of safeguarding which 'has potential to foster anxiety' but some was also caused by the unfamiliarity of the on-line learning environment and intimidation from apparent expertise of others. Keys acknowledges the risk of isolation in on-line learning and places this within the context of social learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1998) or interaction with others being an essential part of learning.

In another study including questionnaires and interviews with child protection workers and their managers, one respondent expresses disinterest in the future of a child and describes his realisation that with so many in need, he didn't have 'enough caring to go around'. He subsequently left social work (Rushton & Martyn, 1990). This sounds like a profound and important experience. Other participants find their learning and experience from the course disregarded by their managers. The study asks what attention is given to staff returning to work after their course has been completed and calls for good quality supervision for social workers undertaking CPD. This suggestion of a need for interest and containment from an authority figure is a common theme throughout the literature.

Anxiety is a typical experience for CPD candidates (Kroll, 2004. Channer, 2009. Sims, 2009.) and I am interested to understand whether there are common features to this. Learning is not a rational process (Taylor, 2001) and it takes more than practical considerations but candidate's call for individual support from tutors (Rushton & Martyn, 1990) as well as their appreciation for structure such as deadlines (Sobiechowska & Maisch, 2007), may be indication of need for containment.

Psychoanalytic Literature

There is recognition of the impact of emotions on the ability to learn within the educational literature and a clear relationship between students' emotions and their motivation and subsequent academic achievement has been established (Mega, Ronconi, & De Beni, 2014; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002). But everything discussed so far does not address internal states of the learner's mind. For this, there is helpful thinking from the psychoanalytic literature.

Writing about teachers rather than social workers, Salzberger-Wittenberg and Osbourne (1999) explore psychodynamic processes of learning. Students' anxieties are understood to be a re-enactment of childhood anxieties around authority figures. A student's initial anxieties about feeling lost in a new institution are like a baby's need to be held and

protected. Student's hopes and fears about their new peer group are compared to sibling relationships and whilst there should be a mutual understanding and acceptance because of shared experience, making moves towards establishing this invokes the fear of being rejected. For these writers, the process of learning is like a baby feeding; knowledge can't be passively transferred as if through an umbilical cord, active engagement is required just as a baby must actively suckle, swallow and digest milk. The concept of transference is used to understand these complicated feelings of students. Experiences are not lost but instead remain stored in the mind ready to be re-awakened whenever a similar experience occurs in the future and so it is that student's experiences with their own parents may be reawakened by the relationship they have or perceive themselves to have with their teacher and thus, when the pain, frustration and fear experienced by the learner becomes intolerable, it can be transferred onto the teacher.

Youell and Canham (2006) also see transference in the classroom. Anxiety is a part of learning at any age. The 'not knowing stage' before we can start to learn the new stuff necessarily brings anxiety and can lead to envy and/or a denial of dependency. Where students experienced childhood difficulty in making links with their family caregiver, they may have built defensive structures in the belief that that people have no interest in them. These defensive structures can subsequently impede their learning. This is explained in terms of Klein's paranoid schizoid state in which thinking and learning new things is difficult whereas a depressive state has anxiety managed, leaving us in a good state to take in new ideas.

Youell reflects upon discussions with a new group of social work students (ibid p.71). Some spoke of excitement, hope and a little anxiety. Others were defensive; this wasn't the first time they'd done a course; why the need for fuss? Gradually, students began to talk about more primitive feelings; their difficulty in making themselves turn up, fears and anxieties about the other students, whether they'd be able to cope, whether they should be there at all. In asking professionals to make themselves vulnerable enough to learn, are we opening them to these difficult feelings?

Waddell (2002, p. 118) is clear about the link between emotional states of mind and the capacity to learn; emotional factors don't just impact our ability to think and learn but to genuinely take on new ideas. Capacity for such growth she suggests, is rooted in very early experiences.

CPD brings emotional conflict (Taylor, 2001). Learning is not a rational process; it is impacted by unconscious factors. Appearing inexperienced can create anxiety in senior professionals and accepting the need to learn new things is difficult. Where learning involves a paradigm shift, this can be felt as a threat to existing states and knowing is associated with control so admitting areas of not-knowing can involve painful relinquishing of authority.

For Kroll (2004), it's the gap between the way people want to practice and the demands of their workplace impacting how they can practice that makes the acquisition of new thinking particularly challenging and threatening in terms of self-awareness. Kroll uses examination of the counter transference to make sense of her students' experience. She describes feeling marginalised, rejected, unwanted and sad and hypothesises that as these weren't feelings

related to her own experiences at that time, they may have been emotions absorbed from the day. I think of this insight as 'super empathy', enabling her to process her own emotional responses more effectively.

Kroll's (ibid) relational account told from the perspective of the teacher senses anxiety, suspicion and defiance in the classroom. The surprise and appreciation of students being greeted with biscuits was a reminder of how unused practitioners are to being looked after and the potential that the 'parent/needier client dynamic' might arise. Kroll provided her candidates with a box of core texts as a transitional object and 'practical resource to save time and anxiety'. On a relational level, she hypothesised that the feelings of rejection, marginalisation and sadness she experienced during the course were countertransference from the students. Having recognised this, Kroll notes, she was able to process some of her 'more negative, punitive responses more effectively'.

This last study is helpful; Kroll perceives a counter transference of rejection as teacher but it is the candidate's experience that is of interest to me; what emotions did they bring to the classroom and how these were communicated and impacted upon ability to learn?

None of the psychoanalytic work has brought us close to the lived experience and inner world of adult learners; to their states of mind and links between their past and their present and their biographical frame. It is this that my presentation contributes to our understanding.

Chapter two; The Research Plan

Paradigms

It is over-simplistic and misleading to present any research conclusions as an ultimate truth. Understanding the context or paradigm of the research allows the reader to make their own decisions about how to respond to the presented material.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain paradigms as basic belief systems which must be accepted if to comprehend the world view of the presenter or researcher. The principles can be understood by recognition of three interconnected questions which are about the nature of the presenter's ontology, epistemology and methodology.

Ontology

Ontology is the debate about what it means to be or to exist. Guba and Lincoln (1994) see this as 'the form and nature of reality' and present a table in which ontology is explained through the lenses of positivism (assuming objective external reality), post positivism (imperfectly apprehendable positive reality), critical theory (influence of historical and social structures) and constructivist relativist (local and specific constructed realities). This was later updated to include a participatory (co-created) lens (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). My research called for an exploratory method allowing open inquiry into the subjective thoughts and experiences of social workers. This quest for openness coupled with my belief in the lived experience of each participant as experienced by them initially suggested a pluralist ontology which recognises that not only are there many different experiences but there are different ways of experiencing and expressing them and of hearing and understanding what is being expressed. So it is not just that what is true for one participant is not necessarily true for another but that the truth about experience depends upon positioning (McDaniel, 2009). Similar episodes might lead to very different outcomes and interpretations in different people. Such constructivist, relativist ontology suggests that what is true for one participant may not be true for another so this research cannot prove or even suggest a definite truth.

But throughout the course of my research, my position on this changed. The stories told to me in the interviews were not subjective constructions; they were an observable experience. The subjectivity was in my interpretation of the reality presented to me, not in whether the reality existed.

Critical realism (CR) offers a certainty of existence; 'there is a reality out there independent of our thoughts and impressions' (Houston, 2001, p. 850). Bhaskar's (2013) seminal work (originally published in 1977) rejects both the scientific certainty of positivism but also the hermeneutic description of post-modern constructivism. It is a meta-theoretical stance that can acknowledge the observable reality of the positivist thinkers but also seeks a deeper, complex and unobservable level to the phenomena. Critical realists maintain a realist ontological assumption that there is a world that exists whether or however we might see it. Unobservable structures exist independently of human thought but these unobservable structures can cause observable events.

In my study, I have identified unconscious drivers (unobservable structures) that exist as a result of early experiences and continue to impact behaviour and so cause observable events. Critical Realism's view is that it is only by recognising and engaging with such unobservable structures that the world can be understood. As a meta theory rather than a procedure for research, it offers no blueprint for a study plan. This can be seen as a criticism as well as an opportunity. So Critical Realism does not dictate methodology, maintaining instead an open approach to discipline. My methodological or empirical task was to create an observable event which had the conditions necessary to be able to uncover these structures.

Bhaskar (ibid, p. 47-48) posits a stratified reality based upon domains of Real, Actual and Empirical. Helpfully for my thesis, which is influenced by psychoanalytic theory, Pilgrim (2017) highlights the parallel ontological certainty for psychoanalysis. Pilgrim's work influences the third column presented here.

	Critical Realism	My Study
Domains of Real Events	Underlying mechanisms or structures that are responsible for what we observe. Cannot be seen but we can speculate on them. Eg gravity; we've never seen it but we accept that it exists and know what it does.	There is a conscious and an unconscious
Domains of Actual Mechanisms	Events that are caused by mechanisms in the real. Cannot observe the real but we can observe what it does. So can observe something falling because of gravity.	Emotions and behaviours can be driven by unconscious processes
Domains of Empirical Experiences	Observable experience; something we can sense. The position of the observer	Free association narrative interviewing creates an outlet for stories of experiences from which analysis can be made

There are arguably challenges in creating alignment between psychoanalysis and critical realism. Subjectivism is axiomatic to psychoanalysis which focusses on a subjectively created inner world. But critical realism accepts the possibility of an external, albeit unobservable truth. Such truth includes the existence of invisible but powerful structures such as racism, sexism and classism. For a purely psychoanalytic approach to respond to these forces, these socio/political structures would need to be seen as inner world processes. But critical realism would accept that whatever the mutually created understanding of 'symptoms' within a psychoanalytic relationship, the real meaning, would remain the same and

'will recur in various forms until finally it is interpreted, for it is bound by the causes of the symptoms' (Hanly, 1999, p. 432).

This will be the case whether the meaning is inner or outer world in origin.

Critical Realism recognises the role of both agency and structure. It engages with the complex by encompassing unpredictability, constant change and emergent behaviours. Like complexity theory, it offers description and explanation but not prediction although it might help identify patterns. So where my study participants describe traumatic school experiences, Critical Realism accepts the existence of conscious and unconscious awareness of these experiences. It recognises that this reality might drive emotion and behaviour but does not predict what this might look like.

Epistemology

Critical Realism presents ontology as superseding but not excluding any epistemological stance which would bring its own historical or social lens.

Epistemology is the debate about knowledge or for Guba and Lincoln (2011), the relationship between the knowledge and would-be knower. They present positivism epistemology (truth in findings), post-positivism (probably truth in findings), critical theory (value mediated findings), constructivism (created findings) and participatory (co-created findings). Despite shifting from Pluralism to Critical Realism, I have maintained my Constructivist epistemological stance as this recognises that as researcher, I have influenced both the answers given to questions as well as the analysis and learning gleaned from the data. I only know what I know from the research because of who I am and the experience I bring. It is the understanding that is the movable feast in Critical Realism; despite its realist ontological assumption, analysis and interpretation is restricted by the experience and knowledge of the researcher. So another researcher might ask the same questions, might even get the same responses but will learn something different as a result. This transactional and subjectivist position stitches me, my life experiences and the world view that I have formed as a result of these into my findings. My findings tell as much of a story about me and the way I understand the world as they do about the social workers who have kindly offered their thoughts as data.

Methodology

Methodology is the means by which the researcher acquires the knowledge. Unlike a positivist (quantitative verification of hypothesis), post-positivist (critical multiplism), critical theory (dialogic) or participatory (collaborative action enquiry), my constructivist methodology is hermeneutic; it is entirely subjected to interpretation. The Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) method which has influenced the interview section of my study invites a psychoanalytic epistemology and this has influenced my approach to interpretation of the data although I make no claims to a fully psychoanalytic approach to analysis.

Reflexivity

As a social worker on my own journey of CPD as well as a Principal Social Worker who supports others through theirs, I came to this project as an 'insider researcher' (Costley, Elliott, & Gibbs, 2010. p.3.). My awareness of relevant issues has built over three decades, gives a helpful lead into social work language and culture as experienced by my respondents and means I had relatively easy access to participants. But it also makes me vulnerable as a researcher to over-identification; it would be easy to assume that I know how the respondents are feeling because they may present a resonance to my own experiences. There were elements of resonance for me with each of the interview participants but particularly so with Tina whose experience of coming from a family where educational ambition was not nurtured chimed so closely with mine that I decided on discussion with my supervisors, to go back to her for a second, shorter interview to check out my analysis of her data and confirm that I was writing about her and not me.

The powerful feeling that my experience brought to the research was one of solidarity and gratitude to my own community of social work practice. I'm aware from my own experience how busy and consuming social work can be and I'm profoundly grateful to the colleagues who donated their time and thoughts to (for the most part) a stranger's project. I'm also aware of my presence as an educator and a principal social worker. My professional role has for some years centred around supporting and encouraging other social workers and the sense of myself as a teacher was very present in the interviews and also to a surprising extent in the questionnaires where the respondents' comments about their own opportunities for development provoked emotional reactions in me.

Clarke (2002) defines 'learning from experience' as listening to the respondent and from this, finding key themes to explore. This is a helpful reference to Bion's (1984) distinction between 'learning from experience' and 'learning about experience'. In the latter, information is amassed with no genuine emotional link to the subject being studied. The fact of my insider-researcher status meant there was an immediate and genuine emotional link to all the participants (questionnaire and interviews) as we had one very important factor: that of social work, in common. Anyway, it is the emotional element that interests me.

Hollway highlights the limited attention paid to the reflexivity of the researcher in traditional qualitative methods because 'without examining ourselves, we run the risk of letting our unelucidated prejudices dominate our research' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008). The FANI method allows the reflexivity of the researcher to be brought into centre stage, recognising the researcher's presence as well as their reaction and response, their impact on the participant and on the information given as well as on the researcher's reception and interpretation of the data. FANI suggests this will happen on an unconscious as well as conscious level. My gender, age, race and class, my own experience as social worker, educator and leader and all other aspects of my life, including the fact that I am now also a student and unsure about my own research skills, impacts on how I understand the participants and the information they offer as well as how the participants respond to me. The power imbalance created by my age, the colour of my skin, the fact of English being my first language and my being an experienced social work practitioner, teacher and leader, undertaking research for a higher degree cannot be sidestepped any more than can

recognition that my own experiences have shaped the way I understand what is before me. My culture shapes my interpretation as has my own life and work experience. Individual and group supervision as well as my own personal reflection and use of a reflective research diary has helped me identify the interference caused by these elements but the extent to which my background has influenced both production and interpretation of the data is a dominating factor.

So, instead of attempting a positivistic invisibility cloak, I have recognised the relationship between the participants and me as vehicles for acting out identities, desires and dynamics experienced elsewhere and they have been a rich source of understanding. Foster (Ruch, Julkunnen, & Epstein, 2016, pp. 49-67) says feelings aren't obstacles to understanding what we see, they are a way to help us to understand. To decipher these feelings, the Kleinian concepts of transference, countertransference and projection have been considered as part of reflection and supervision discussion.

Ethics

Like Clarke (2002), I am aware of my limitations as I am not a psychoanalyst. Unlike Clarke, I am also new to research and to psychoanalytic thought and any psychoanalytic interpretations I make might simply be wrong. A psychoanalytic hermeneutic and epistemology risks presentation of my own feelings as confirmed data about the emotions of my participants (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008). Even with good access to psychoanalytically informed supervisors and research group such as I have enjoyed, any insight proposed can only be tentatively offered. Hook (2008) asks how a researcher can apply psychoanalytic thought without the context, regular clinical supervision and long term relationship required by a psychoanalyst to do the same. This is an important cautionary note and is echoed by Archard (2020) who describes similar doubts about his own ability to apply psychoanalytic analysis to his FANI-gleaned data and considers the merits of triangulation by sharing preliminary analyses with participants. Not sharing initial analysis, he notes, denies the participants a meaningful voice in the research and bestows an uncritical assumption of authority on the researcher. But as defended subjects, participants may not be in touch with issues that appear to the researcher and there is a risk of conflation of a researcher's analysis of data with a therapist's analysis of material willingly given within a therapeutic relationship for the purpose of challenge.

I decided to test my analysis of the data with two of the interview participants by sending them the excerpts of analysis (Appendix 3) that related to them and asking whether they recognised themselves in my interpretation. I sent material to Tina because such were the similarities between our stories that I was concerned I may have been imposing my own experiences onto her data and I sent material to Jackie because I knew she had particular interest in this approach to analysis and I felt she would have been prepared for my interpretation.

Both gave positive responses, confirming accuracy in my reading of their data but both exemplified Archard's caution in sharing analyses with participants.

Tina

'I think you're spot on. I read this. I did look at my diary of the day I came to see you. And I had recorded on the day that I did find it quite emotional and I was obviously quite tongue tied in talking about how I felt. Em, I'm not resentful about what happened in my earlier life but I do think it is something I think about and often refer to. And I do think that is significant about em, how I feel at the moment and it is obviously something that affects how I feel about all learning. No, it was very good. I think it was an accurate summing up of how I felt on the day but yes, of my situation.'

I was struck by Tina's use of the word 'resentful' as hadn't used this word in my analysis. I considered the possibility of projective identification in this exchange and wondered whether the resentment she referred to was hers or mine.

Jackie

'It was actually. It was quite powerful reading it. I was.. It was strange reading myself on the page in that way. I have to admit part of me wanted, hoped that I had sounded more eloquent than that but em, the essence of it was absolutely true that was real and I, I think I was quite struck by how much of that you captured and it's actually quite touching in some ways. I had to take a moment myself after I read it to kind of collect myself. I wasn't expecting to feel that way about it but I did. It was very powerful and I think the real sense of what has contributed to my learning. Not just the good stuff but the racism, the exclusion was... painful's not the right word but powerful and totally explains up my journey. Em, not that it sums up everything but it was such a big feature... I don't know how many people get to reflect like that so I find it quite a privileged opportunity to have been able to think and talk about my life in that way, talk about my learning in that way. And yes, I think you've captured a lot of what I said. Not just the words but the spirit and sense of what was said...'

It may be that Jackie's parents' positive messages had shielded her from the racism she experienced at school and that my preliminary analysis was her first conscious view of a painful time. Certainly, I felt the need to tell her that she had not dwelt in any way on racism and that my analysis showed how her parent's positivity had empowered her to overcome such external challenge.

Both these examples offered some positive triangulation to my analysis but like Archard, I decided the participants had not 'signed up' for this level of feedback that might challenge their view of themselves and anyway, I did not have the skills to either offer it or support them through their response.

The more successful any psychoanalytic interpretation of the data, the greater the concern that participants might unwittingly (and perhaps unwillingly), reveal more than intended or aware. Both Tina and Jackie were aware of the psychoanalytical influence on my analysis when they offered to participate but Hollway & Jefferson (2008) tell of one participant who said she would not have taken part had she known she would reveal such intimate details. Clarke's (2002) position is clear; participants must be in control of the data they choose to give so, when his participant requested the return of his data, it was returned. But the balance of power in this research relationship might impact on whether a participant feels

able to say they want to retract their data. Good listening is a powerful and disarming tool and people can reveal more than they would choose. As a social worker, I listen for a living and am aware that this, coupled with the FANI method could lead participants to reveal more than anticipated. Participants would ordinarily be aware of information they have given but a psychoanalytic hermeneutic might reveal data not consciously known to them, creating the complex issue of how to give consent for information not yet known.

Hollway & Jefferson (ibid) address this through 'preliminary consent' and guarding against harm. As my participants are social workers, it might be reasonable to anticipate they would have some understanding of psychoanalytic principles but it was an ethical imperative that participants were forewarned of the approach. There was been full discussion about this before each of the interviews and it was made clear both in the pre-interview discussions and in the Consent forms that data can be retracted.

Ethical imperative extends to confidentiality and anonymity. Pseudonyms are used and clearly identifying features excluded.

Chapter three; Method and Methodology

This was a mixed methods study in two parts consisting of

- On-line questionnaire with a combination of closed and open questions
- Free association narrative interviews

Recruitment of Participants

The following tweet was posted on the morning of 15 October 2018 and pinned to my Twitter profile.

'Help please! Participants needed for my doctoral study questionnaire (30 mins) on experience of CPD for social workers. If more than 2 years post qual SW in England, please DM² me your email. I'll send details. Also need 8 SWs for interviews in London. Please RT³. Many thanks.'

I am an active part of the social work Twitter network in contact with an on-line social work community of approximately 2000 social workers. Twitter response rate is usually low. Glover (2016) suggests 'tagging' Twitter users with a large following in the hope they will 'retweet' or 'share' as this has the potential of presenting a request to thousands of social work followers. I did not 'tag', trusting instead to the good-will of the professional social work community of practice on Twitter as well as the current interest in social work research (Manthorpe & Moriarty, 2016). My trust paid off and I was retweeted by high profile social workers with substantial followings.

I also sent an email to 180 social workers at my place of work alerting them to my request for questionnaire participants. Because my senior position might make colleagues feel obliged to participate, I was clear the questionnaire was anonymous and I would not know who participated. The email included the link to the questionnaire, so no need to contact me for details.

Response Rate

Two weeks later on 29 Oct 2018, I unpinned my tweet and posted the following message

'Massive Thank You to all twitter-pals who responded/retweeted/promoted my study. I have 50 questionnaire responses (v respectable triangulation to interviews) & I think enough interview participants.'

By this time, my original tweet had been retweeted 161 times and received 24,556 'impressions'⁴ and 535 'engagements'⁵. In response, I had received 67 email addresses as

² 'Direct Message'; tweet is sent privately and cannot be seen publicly

³ 'Retweet'; pass the message on

⁴ Number of times it was served up in someone's timeline. Not the number of times it was seen

⁵ Number of times a user interacted with the tweet

requests for further information and I sent a link to the survey and an invitation to participate to each of these.

By 15 November 2019, I had 68 completed questionnaires and stopped collecting responses.

Eight respondents voluntarily identified themselves as being from my place of work as they offered to be interviewed so gave their email addresses. I have no way of knowing whether they found out about my study from Twitter or from my work email.

This represents a minimum of 4.4% ($8 / 180 \times 100 = 4.4$) response rate (by completing the questionnaire and offering to take part in the interviews) from my email in comparison to Twitter's 12.5% ($67 / 535 \times 100 = 12.5$) response rate (by requesting the link to the questionnaire) from engagements. These numbers can only offer an indication of where responses may have come from as I cannot know how many twitter respondents went on to complete the questionnaire or how many email respondents completed the questionnaire but did not give their email address.

Twitter's potential reach is wide but it might be thought surprising that the Twitter response rate seems so much higher than that at my own place of work where I have personal connections with much of the workforce. However, the twitter response rate from impressions is less impressive at 0.27% ($67 / 24556 \times 100 = 2.27$) and the eight respondents identified as being from my work is the lowest possible estimate of responses and covers those who gave me their email addresses with a view to being interviewed. I have no way of knowing how many more completed the questionnaire without leaving any identification.

My personal connection is more evident in the percentage of offers to be interviewed as out of the 68 questionnaire responses, 36 gave their email address inviting contact to arrange an interview and of these, 8 (22.2%) were my work colleagues and a further 6 (16.6%) were social workers with whom I have taught, worked or studied.

Six respondents were selected based on proximity to my interview venue and invited for up to two interviews. A further two social workers were invited from my own network in response to my request for volunteers for pilot interviews. The understanding was that if my technique were found to be wanting, the data might not be used but in fact, it was used. Two participants didn't turn up when expected. One because she forgot and one because of the bad weather. To replace them within the window of time that I had allowed for time off work to interview, I contacted a respondent known to me who had volunteered to be interviewed and who I thought was likely to be reliable and another respondent known to me who offered to recruit another local social worker thought to be interested and available.

Limitations

The study is small so cannot claim to be representative of social work. Its hope was to examine a small section to offer broader understanding. But even this is limited by the implicit bias of the participants. All the interview and questionnaire participants will have volunteered to give up their time to this study so all must be part of the group of social workers who have some interest in CPD or research and are prepared to make an effort to engage with its progress. In the case of the interviewees, for the most part, this meant giving

up a day of their own time. For this reason, the study is unlikely to have captured a clear picture of those CPD candidates mentioned earlier who seem less affected or even untouched by the experience.

On-line Questionnaire

The on-line questionnaire was intended to

1. Recruit to the interview stage of the project
2. Offer material to help form the opening question for the interview stage of the project
3. Introduce and potentially triangulate emerging themes of the study

The questionnaire was successful in meeting these aims and produced data that was richer than expected so whilst this study's focus is the interview data, the findings from the questionnaire are also presented in appendix 1.

Interviews

I rejected the possibility of structured interviews with a pre-determined order of set questions, as being too scripted and restrictive for my purpose; I did not want to guide respondent's thinking as this would have resulted in collection of data on their responses to my thoughts. As far as is possible, I wanted the themes that emerged to be true to the participants; for the participants to take an active role in steering the direction of research resulting in data that is more closely reflective of the areas in which social workers rather than social work researcher, find meaning. This position values the subjective experience of each of the participants and allows me to observe meaning, themes or patterns from the emerging data.

Similarly, semi structured interviews would not have allowed respondents to think through their interpretation of the topics. Questions elicit answers to those questions but I wanted a narrative of personal experiences so used unstructured interviews beginning with an open question, inviting the respondent to talk about whatever comes into their mind. This is a feature of the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) which moves away from a co-production of content between the researcher and respondent, recognises the relevance of past experiences (Wengraf & Chamberlayne, 2006) and seeks the respondent's Gestalt (whole story). BNIM is a biographical method and although I have been looking for specific experiences, biographical context was given by all the respondents and has been helpful.

My interview approach was to ask an opening question and follow the flow of narrative as led by the participant. Elements of the interview were single narratives as the participant offered a stream of thoughts. Other elements were more conversational although always led by the thoughts the participants raised. This interview approach was influenced by the FANI method (Hollway & Jefferson, 2012) in which the use of free association allows the direction of thought to be determined by the respondent and allows their unconscious links to shape the telling of their experience.

Interviews took place at The Tavistock clinic, my place of study and at that time, also of work. Each participant was met in Reception and taken to the interview room, allowing for 'small talk'. The Tavistock has a far-reaching reputation and is known for relational practice so using this venue may have impacted on the participants. The interviews took place in a study/therapy room and were recorded on a small device that sat on the table in view. Interviews were opened with the following statement

'As you know, I'm interested in exploring the emotional experience of CPD. So in this interview, I'm not going to interrupt or guide you in any way. I want to hear what you have to say and the connections you make. I'm inviting you to talk in whatever way you like about your experience of CPD, its impact on you and your development as a practitioner.'

For the most part, this led to a natural flow of conversation led by the participant's narrative but occasionally prompted by my follow up questions based upon the subjects introduced by the participants.

Interview Analysis

Narrative analysis approach to qualitative data is an interpretation of stories that participants bring (O'Leary, 2017. p313.). Stories remain whole to allow the richness of the participant's experience to remain in focus through the analysis. These stories may or may not be empirically accurate but will give rich insight into how the respondent experiences and makes sense of their own life. If appreciation of the respondent's Gestalt is axiomatic to comprehension of their emotion, data analysis that effectively separates data from the context of the person would be insufficient (Hollway & Jefferson, 2012) so immediately following interviews, I wrote detailed notes on my own experience and observations during the session (Clarke, 2002). I also constructed pen pictures of each of the participants (Hollway & Jefferson, 2012) and transcribed my own interviews in order to immerse myself in the detail of the data.

Hollway and Jefferson (2012. P.51) suggest a starting point of what I notice, why I notice this, how can I interpret what I notice and how do I know my interpretation is the right one? Their psychodynamic methodology works with the transference and countertransference present in the interview and includes analysis of the researcher's own unconscious anxieties that arose during the interview and whilst analysing the data. This model allows the researcher's reflexivity to become a research tool so consideration of how we respond to each other can suggest more about the respondent's experience.

But this doesn't offer a new researcher a means for organising the reams of data that surface from the study and I needed an approach that included clear process for data management.

Thematic analysis does allow for inductive reading and this influences my chosen model for analysis of the interview data which is Cooper's (2014) 'evolved' approach. I used MaxQDA to examine the data for new ideas then put these into a series of questions that were organised into themes and put to the data in the form of 'what does the data tell us about...' questions. These were put to the interview data resulting in thematic organisation from

which a summary response to each of the questions was drawn. The next stage pulled these responses together to create a coherent answer to the main research questions but it is in the cross-case analysis that Cooper suggested 'higher level thinking' and new discovery might occur and it is from here that my proposed 'Learning Response' has emerged.

Although not a psychoanalyst, my analysis has a psychoanalytical influence. This is evident in my latent analysis of the data as in the free association interviews. The nature of my starting interview question invited responses based on the respondents' experiences not my own thematic expectations so the themes that emerged (with my help!) were as far as possible, from the data not my preconceptions. But it is my developing skills of analysis that I hope have produced helpful insight into the experiences of my participants.

Chapter four; Narrative Interviews

This chapter presents the interview data. It firstly introduces the eight interview participants through a series of pen pictures. It then offers the responses their data gave to the research questions through presentation of excerpts of narrative and accompanying discussion grouped by the themes that arose through the analysis.

Pen Pictures

This section introduces the eight social workers who were interviewed for this study. I use terms such as 'rescripting', 'replaying' and 'compensatory experience'. This is the language I have developed to understand the participant's experiences as explained by the proposed Learning Response model.

Aysun

Aysun is 31-40 years. She is from West Asia, speaks English as a second language and has been practising as a social worker for 3 years.

Aysun responded to my request for participants through Twitter. I initially thanked her but said I wouldn't interview her as we already knew each other. Following discussion with my supervisor however, I decided I would interview people known to me as well as people I don't know so asked Aysun whether still willing. When one participant didn't show up, I asked Aysun whether she might be able to find me another and she had this arranged for me by the following day.

I taught Aysun some years ago when she was in the 1st year of her social work degree. I remember her as being an excellent student and I knew she valued me as a tutor. I took her class again just once in her 3rd year and looked for Aysun but couldn't see her. I realised later in the session that the 'new student' at the back of the class was in fact Aysun; she had removed her veil.

I greeted Aysun in Reception. As we came upstairs in the lift, we caught up on our families and work. Aysun's first social work job was in the authority where I now work. She is now working in a neighbouring authority and I wondered whether she might have come because she was interested in coming back to my authority although I think she would have helped me with my research anyway.

There was obvious warmth between the two of us. Before the interview, we asked each other about our children. This process of us each revealing a bit more about ourselves felt like a re-negotiation of this relationship outside of student/teacher. But there is still a definite junior/senior dynamic caused by our previous and current roles as well as our age. In attempt to dissipate this, I told Aysun how grateful I was to her for coming. She told me how grateful she is for the inspiration and that she thinks about my classes much of the time at work.

As the interview began, I felt fully engaged and curious to hear about her experience. Because I remembered her as being so committed and competent academically, I was surprised by Aysun's account of bunking off school because the stuff they taught had such limited value. Her 'priceless education' she said was from her life experience, from her own struggle through finding herself.

Aysun's mother, brother and aunts are all teachers. Aysun found their high standards and perfectionism to be stifling. While at university studying Media, Aysun came to the UK on a trip to learn English, met her husband and stayed. Quickly, she found herself to be a housewife with young children in a foreign country. Her plan had been to return to Media studies but she knew she did not want to do that and was determined she would not teach. It was at that time that the death of Baby P was in the news and Aysun found out about the existence of social work which was a field she had not previously encountered. Even though everyone was blaming the social workers, Aysun said she was drawn to the social justice/human rights/connecting with people angle of the work and decided she would become a social worker. Because her home country education is not acknowledged here, she took evening classes and an Access ⁶ course and was accepted to study social work at her local university.

Aysun loved university; engaged with the learning and enjoyed getting to know the other students but her home life was becoming increasingly difficult as she was unhappy in her marriage and was questioning her own position and choices in life. Her first social work job was a shock; the pace of reality was very different from the theoretical view of social work presented at university. But still she loved her team and earning her own money. Aysun talked about this time in her life with pride; she was in her mid-30s but this was the first time she had earned her own money, was starting to build up her own life and made the decision to divorce her husband.

Aysun sees a connection between what she does for her clients and what she is trying to do for herself in encouraging people to

'honour their lives, honour their experiences, you know I'm in there, I'm in the picture now. Whatever I'm telling people, I'm applying it to myself.'

Aysun's narrative is of one who has resisted constraints that have been placed upon her by taking courageous decisions to take up her own agency and direct her own life. But this has not been easy and there are always disappointments. Aysun finds it unfair that so much is expected of social workers and there are so few boundaries in terms of what social workers can be expected to do. Now, Aysun questions whether her future lies in social work. She wants to stay and finds tremendous satisfaction in the connections she makes with people through work and the changes she can help them to make in their lives. The connections she makes with her peers seem to form a compensatory experience in that they help her to reframe her disappointments into positive experiences and enable her to engage with. But to survive, she works hard to create space and time for her own wellbeing and encourages other social workers to do the same.

⁶ Diploma to prepare (usually mature) students for higher education study

Aysun describes learning in terms of monetary value. The learning at university was 'gold' but the more powerful learning from life experience has been 'priceless'. Although Aysun rejected the approach of the teachers in her family, it seems their message about the value of learning is still with her but their approach to learning was non-facilitative for Aysun who remains determined to do this on her own terms and looks to self-development through yoga, breathing and self-care just as much as to the training on offer at work.

I enjoyed this interview very much. It was only afterwards, when repeatedly hearing her recorded words that I noticed the regret and disappointment in the way Aysun tells her story. Despite having successfully rescripted her life in so many ways by becoming a mother, divorcing, becoming a UK citizen and a social worker, it seems that Aysun hasn't yet found what she seeks. Her accomplishment is evident; Aysun has rescripted her relationship with learning as has qualified as a social worker whilst managing young children and a home but the world of social work is far from perfect and the voice of her perfectionist relatives rings clear in her dissatisfaction with the way things have turned out and her own sense of dissatisfaction is replayed. I sensed a feeling of frustration and of having been let down in Aysun's narrative. Just as when she was in school, the learning may have been a waste of time.

I realised after the interview that there is a great deal that Aysun did not tell me. She did not talk about her religion or the removal of her veil and she barely mentioned her family in her country of birth. 'I'm a British citizen now' she had said. I sensed a will for reinvention.

Jackie

Jackie is 41-50 years. She is Black, British Caribbean and has been practising as a social worker for 7 years.

Jackie worked in a secure forensic hospital but at the time of interview, was working her notice before moving on to a new job as a university social work lecturer. Jackie is a fellow student on my doctoral course. She originally answered my request for colleagues to be interviewed as a trial run but on the suggestion of my tutor, also agreed that if the interview was successful in terms of eliciting meaningful data, her data could be used as part of my study.

Because she was in her final few days at work, I travelled to Jackie's place of work instead of her coming to The Tavistock. She collected me from the station, drove me to the hospital and took me through the complicated security arrangements of keys and codes to get me inside.

At the beginning of interview, I had a sense of Jackie speaking in a guarded manner, as if she was saying what she thought she was meant to say. Later in the interview, she talked about her father being a good person 'even when no one was looking'. I was struck by this idea. When she spoke about her Christian faith, I could see that for Jackie, someone is always looking; Jesus is always aware of what she is doing so her life must have constant purpose and intention.

Jackie was born to Windrush generation parents who having not received the welcome they had been promised in the UK, worked to establish their own Caribbean community. Jackie's language is consistently polite and respectful but her school experience was racist in its neglect and failure to see any potential in her as a young black girl. Her family's story is one of successful resilience and a determination to see the best in others. Her own story is one of refusal to see the racism and an insistence that people are encouraging and supportive and within her family and Caribbean community, this was her experience.

Jackie's father was a pastor in the Caribbean church. Faith was a dominating part of family life and Jackie describes wearing a hat to go to church every Sunday morning and every Sunday evening. Both Jackie's parents continued to live their faith through their work for their community, well into old age. Jackie herself decided as a teenager that this was the right path for her too and also committed her life to Christianity. There were six girls in Jackie's family. The sisters read Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice* and likened themselves to the Bennet sisters. Jackie attributes her love of literature to the reading and discussion that took place at home over any input from school.

State school offered nothing; Jackie's ability and indeed Jackie herself seems to have been entirely overlooked. In terms of grades achieved at GCSE, this took a significant toll. But there was a strong compensatory experience for this in the form of the church Saturday school that Jackie attended, where standards and expectations were high and Jackie was consistently expected to take responsibility and show initiative. Jackie became a local and national youth leader and regularly stood up to speak in front of large audiences. Jackie's parents also formed a powerful compensatory experience to the neglect and racism of school; they would not allow her to see her situation negatively, insisted that she take responsibility for building her own life instilled in her the belief that life is there to be lived to the full. Jackie left school with few qualifications but her work as an administrative support officer in a social work team introduced her to social work and to social workers who encouraged her to pick up her qualifications. At the age of 34, Jackie went back to college and then to university, surprising herself by achieving a first-class degree in social work. Jackie presents a mixture of humility and pride in her achievements; she is not used to seeing herself as a high achiever and yet her degree result, success on a doctoral programme and the offer of a job as a university lecturer suggests this is what she is. But her faith and the idea of leaving a positive trail for future generations is a constant presence as is the voice of her parents telling her to do her best and Jackie continues to replay the optimism and hope they instilled in her. I felt emotional at the end of Jackie's interview; partly gratitude to her for having shared her story and partly connecting to her as a mother of boys and seeing the power of her story as the legacy she says she wishes to leave.

John

John is 51-60 years. He is White British and has been practising as a social worker for 19 years.

John responded to my call on Twitter for participants but I originally said I would not interview him as we have known each other since he came in to represent an employer view when I was teaching in a university eight years ago. When two participants didn't show up, I contacted John to ask whether he would still be interviewed.

John is the manager of a large adult's disability team. He also has experience of using mental health services as he has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and has previously been detained under The Mental Health Act. He now gives talks to social workers and AMHPs⁷ about his experience. Coincidentally, another participant (who I didn't know), cited John's recent talk at a conference as having had the most impact of all CPD events that she has attended.

John is very aware of his appearance; he is big and looks powerful. His nervous laughter and description of himself as a schoolboy being bullied are a difficult contradiction to his appearance. He is vulnerable and though much of the interview, I felt protective of him.

But I found John's interview hard to follow and after the interview, thought it probably had not worked and that I wouldn't be able to use the data. This may have been a powerful experience of countertransference, enabling me to experience John's doubtful state of mind as when I transcribed his interview his words made helpful sense and it struck me how insightful his thoughts were.

John was violently attacked and bullied at school. He sees this frightening and intimidating experience as being the cause of his mental distress. The physical manhandling he endured whilst being detained and taken to hospital was a throwback to this early experience and John now has a deep-rooted fear of having his autonomy wrestled away from him. Unlike all the other participants, John does not talk about his home life; school was so traumatic that it seems to dominate his memories and feelings about learning. He came away from school as early as he could and took manual jobs for a few years until he was drawn back into education to do an Access course. The teachers on the course were engaging and enthusiastic for his potential and John responded well to this encouragement. He speaks with evident wonder about being given good feedback on a piece of maths homework he completed. The kindness from the teachers and the peer support he experienced on the Access course seems to have created a compensatory experience for John which did not take away the pain of his school life but did enable him to rescript his relationship with learning. He completed the course, qualified as a social worker and has since achieved an MSc in Leadership. The turning point for John seems to have been in experiencing kindness and compassion whilst learning but also in being in control; he did not choose to be at school but did choose to do the Access course and subsequent qualifications. But John still makes the connection between mandatory learning and school so continues to find learning experiences that are imposed upon him to be difficult. My sense is that he is looking to replay his school experience in a more palatable way through his chosen CPD.

Formal learning at school did not work for John and he does not trust it now but sees continual learning from experience.

⁷ Approved Mental Health Professionals

'My CPD takes place constantly. I'm always learning something. I've always got something going on (laughs). Always dropped into an experience I've never been in before and so you've got to scramble about and find your way out of it. So yes, I do some structured learning but the structured learning I do now is not as relevant as the learning I do live.'

He pays for private education for his own children in the hope this will keep them safe and seeks his own development from informal learning opportunities.

John referred to his size; he wants to show the small boy who needs protecting but people see the fully formed man. Perhaps just as the sessions he gives are a chance to show him as he feels, the sessions he attends are a chance to re-write that original bad experience.

Jules

Jules is 31-40 years. She is White British and has been practising as a social worker for 11 years.

Jules responded to my call for participants on Twitter. Her on-line enthusiasm for social work as well as the emails we had exchanged prior to the interview (and the fact she shares a name with my son), made me pre-dispositioned to enjoy meeting her. This felt reciprocated and our conversation whilst walking from Reception to the interview room was of mutual admiration for each other's social media profile.

Jules works in an emergency duty team. She identifies as 'queer', having recently changed her name from a notably feminine one to her current more gender-neutral name. She is a committed, political thinker and left-wing radical. I had the impression of her wanting to seize what life has to offer. I found her to be interested, emotional and authentic. Belief in the potential of social work felt like a strong point of connection for us. Jules clearly wants to learn and contribute and had given up her day off to be interviewed.

Jules began her interview by talking about how she goes about her CPD; reading blogs, joining social work groups on Facebook, following the social work community of Twitter. Jules talked about her love of reading books but added that she is not reading as much as she should just now. From when Jules said that she 'should' be reading more, it felt like the introduction of a third voice into the conversation as the consistent influence of Jules' father became apparent.

Throughout her interview, Jules referred to her father's encouragement of her learning. He was a teacher in a special needs school although he worked long hours, their time spent together was filled with him explaining the world around her and encouraging her to be curious and active in seeking growth and knowledge. Although not religious, on Saturdays, he would take her to a Quaker bookshop. He would read to her and show her how to make learning interesting. He instilled a love of discovery and self-development that continues to drive her now.

'My first job like not as a social worker but in related field like, I worked in an approved premise for women offenders like a probation bail hostel thing. And it was called the

Elizabeth Fry hostel and Elizabeth Fry used to be on our £5 notes and she was a Quaker and she'd go and give blankets to women in prison and she's yeah, I prefer her to Winston Churchill who's now on the notes. I went to this hostel, I met the manager who I really liked And I was quoting Elizabeth fry at them and they had no idea who she was, and I was like 'we're in her hostel, how can you not know about her?'. Anyhow, just a funny little story.'

Jules' father worked long hours modelling intense work in a challenging world. He told his children to never become a teacher and Jules notes with interest that she has not become a teacher (although she has recently started taking guest lecturer sessions in her local university so this may yet happen). Jules did not follow her father's profession but her elder brother did and Jules speaks about her brother with generous love and admiration. It may be that some of these powerful feelings really belong to her father but can't be acknowledged as such because of unresolved feelings about his absence while he was at work. But Jules is aware of her father's influence. She talks about his socialist politics. His love of politically motivated music of the 1980s and the fact that this music is still a part of her life now. Most of all, Jules talks about his ability to bring learning to life and notes with pleasure that he is now teaching her young nephews in the way he taught her.

Jules was the only girl in a family of four. She ascribes her fierce competitiveness to this experience. But her love for her brothers is evident and she describes each sibling with affection and pride. As a child, Jules had a hearing impairment but this was not picked up and treated until she was eighteen. At school, she would be told off for being loud. Her volume may have been exacerbated by her undiagnosed hearing impairment but it was also a mark of her enthusiasm for learning and Jules notes this did not fit in with the expectation of the way girls should behave. Jules is aware of the impact of her own presence on others and talks about the importance of ensuring marginalised voices are heard in classrooms.

As a feminist, Jules considers many of her experiences in terms of gender and consciously attributes much of her belief system to her mother's life experience. Her mother is an artist and stayed at home with the children, taking on a traditional supporting/homemaking role. Jules said that seeing her mother in this role made her realise she did not want this for herself. Jules refers to a problematic relationship with her parents but my impression was that they had done a good job and this thought seemed to occur to Jules while she was talking.

'Yeah, I think our parents did a good job It's not all been roses. I mean my parents There's a bit of crapness, in my experience, in being parented by them. But I think they got that right, in terms of the four of us being quite committed to what we do; quite passionate people. It's good.'

Perhaps it was the combination of her teacher-father, her stay-at-home mother and her competitive brothers that created such a facilitative learning environment that Jules replays now, driving her only towards her own learning but to creating fertile learning conditions for others.

As Jules was leaving, she said she was going to ring her father that evening and I wonder whether the interview had helped her to review their relationship.

When Jules was seventeen, her brother experienced his first episode of psychosis. He became very unwell and this was a difficult time for the whole family. Jules found that she intuitively understood how to support him and her parents. She observed both excellent practice and very poor practice in the staff around her brother and attributes this her need to be the very best she can be as a social worker, to this experience.

After the interview, I realised Jules had not talked directly about her queer identity and how this had developed although she did suggest there is a PhD in that and we talked about the possibility of her studying at The Tavistock.

Mia

Mia is 31-40 years. She is White, Antipodean and has been practising as a social worker for 11 years.

Mia was recruited via Aysun who asked whether anyone at work might be willing to be interviewed. I hadn't recognised her name but Mia reminded me she had been a student on a course I had organised at The Tavistock. We had had very little contact as I hadn't actually taught her but I did then remember her as a bright, friendly and cheerful presence in the class. We talked about her course as we walked to the interview room. Mia had a good experience at The Tavistock and said she was pleased to be involved in my project.

Mia qualified as a social worker in her home country and stayed in London whilst on a trip around Europe. She now works in a community team in London. I found Mia to be smiley and friendly although difficult to get to know. In the interview, talk didn't seem to flow and I felt concerned the interview would be driven by me with questions and answers rather than the intended free association. To some extent, this was the case. On reflection, I wondered whether she was shy and nervous and whether it might have been helpful to go for a coffee and chat before turning on the recorder and starting the interview. I was struck by the concreteness of the knowledge Mia described; Mental Capacity Act/legal knowledge/policy awareness and wondered whether this might connect to her father being a scientist, whether she might be more comfortable with positivistic presentation of knowledge and whether the non-structured free-association model might have been too unfamiliar.

Mia's father is a PhD scientist. Mia talks about how much he enjoys his work but also about how he encouraged her with her learning; talking her through maths and science projects. Her mother also worked but without a professional qualification. Mia describes her sister as very bright but has taken time away from her professional career to bring up her family and run a restaurant. Mia says she has been reflecting lately on how she was encouraged when younger but never pushed. She wonders now whether a little push might have been a good thing and remembers her sister telling her that exams did not matter and how this influenced her attitude to study. But Mia did learn how to play the piano and is now an accomplished pianist. She notes though that she did not learn in the way her family had suggested which was by also studying history of music. There seems to be some regret here too. Her success in learning to play is a powerful compensatory experience; Mia learnt in her

own way and it worked. So family life was facilitative for Mia's learning but it seems she was given a freedom to direct this herself that she may now feel she squandered.

Mia did not have clear ideas about what she wanted to do when she left school so her aunt, who is an occupational therapist suggested occupational therapy. Mia said she might have done this but her sister suggested social work because of the broad opportunity it offers. Mia was not sure about her decision whilst at university. She did not feel she learnt much that was helpful but whilst working after graduating, in a mental health team, she met an English social worker who talked about The Mental Capacity Act. This appealed to Mia and she began to develop a clearer understanding of the potential of social work in pushing back on the medical model and focussing more directly on people. It may be the definitive nature of a legal steer on practice that appealed to Mia.

Mia seems to have warmed to her profession although I did sense lingering doubt. She sees herself as a people-pleaser and finds the clarity of some of the CPD on offer to be helpful in her ability to be able to impose boundaries on what can and cannot be offered. Mia makes the most of the CPD on offer in her authority but her approach to CPD seems to be a repeat of her early experience in which she is unsure about her own interests and is willing to be guided. Her father's positivistic influence is still present; she seeks clarity, reads science articles and recently attended a New Scientist conference.

I had the impression that Mia particularly misses her sister and her father. I noticed that she mentions her manager a few times as offering a helpful influence in guiding her practice and in encouraging her continuing professional development. What Mia describes as 'people pleasing' might be seen as a wish for validation through. I wondered whether her manager represents her father as an external figure to recognise her achievements. My sense is that although Mia may be yet to acknowledge this to herself, her success in creating a life and career in another country is a powerful indication of her ability to control her own life and a dramatic replication of her learning to play the piano in her own way.

I had offered a metaphor about musicians needing to learn how to play the notes before can add the art of music. I connected this to Mia's focus on law as a framework of practice before adding the 'notes' of the relationship. We both enjoyed this metaphor but I worried afterwards that this and the other connections and observations I made in the interview weren't appropriate. If this was an experience of countertransference, I remain curious about what this might have suggested and whether Mia is continuing to replay her earlier doubt about her abilities and her choices and whether it was these emotions that I sensed as I felt increasing doubt through the interview about my skills as a researcher.

On reflection, I remained uncomfortable about this interview and considered the possibility of countertransference. If Mia's move to the UK is representative of an unconscious need to maintain distance between herself and her family, it may be that her resistance to enquiry is an indication of a similarly unconscious need to maintain distance with others. On a conscious level, Mia was happy to volunteer for the research interview but unconsciously, the interview may have provoked a feeling of discomfort that was projected into me. Mia's powerful defence mechanisms prevented deeper exploration and as researcher, I took this

experience as data enough without wishing to push or probe in any way that might cause further discomfort or anxiety.

Sarah

Sarah is 23-30 years. She is White British and has been practising as a social worker for 4 years.

Sarah had responded to my call on Twitter for participants. My request for volunteers had said 'easy access to The Tavistock' and I had assumed this would mean London based people so was surprised when I realised Sarah was driving 90 miles to reach me. Heavy snow was forecast the day of the interview. The other interviewee who lived in London had cancelled because of the weather so when Sarah rang to say she had arrived early, I suggested she come straight to the interview. It was lunchtime so I bought her a sandwich from the canteen and filled a bag with treats by way of 'thank you'. I was aware of wanting to feed her, to welcome her and look after her.

Sarah presents as confident and contained. I noted her steady voice although this may have been a comparison to my own nervousness. Although relatively recently qualified, Sarah is already an AMHP, is completing a post-qualifying master's degree and is doing a Practice Educator qualification. My impression was of intelligent and contained competence. Her visit to the Tavistock seemed to be a part of her CPD; she talked about 'coming here' when talking about learning at university. I was aware that Sarah will have taken a day's annual leave and the cost of her journey to participate. I was impressed by her commitment and concerned that the day should be worthwhile for her.

Sarah was focussed throughout the interview and quickly grasped the idea that I wanted her to talk about whatever seemed relevant to her. Her stories of family life were of being encouraged but not pushed and this seems to have influenced her approach to her life now; Sarah is ambitious for her own development but seems to have a healthy perspective on this and mentioned that priorities might change as her life moves on and she may acquire other commitments.

Sarah describes a happy childhood in which she was allowed to pursue her own interests but her parents had plenty of time for her, attended her school events, taught her plant names and so on. From a young age, Sarah enjoyed looking after her children; her cousins and family friends. Work experience was in a school and her sixth form voluntary work was in a nursery so it seemed clear from an early age that Sarah was going to work with people and she thought then it would probably be with children, perhaps as a teacher.

Sarah's parents are both nurses. Her mother studied for her nursing degree when Sarah was eleven and her father recently completed his master's degree. Sarah thinks of them as 'practical people' and suggests this is a reason she took a practical job. With her parents studying, higher education was presented within the family as being desirable and achievable. School was relatively easy. GCSE's were not a particular challenge but Sarah was very pleased when she came to do A' levels and she was able to choose how she spent her

time. Sarah felt she was ready at this point to stop studying prescribed subjects and start to follow her own interests. So the structure of school worked well for her and A' levels were a more interesting challenge. The issue of choice has remained important to Sarah; it is important that she be in control of her actions. Sarah talks about the difference between mandatory courses and the learning opportunities she has chosen to pursue. She is willing to invest her own time into her professional progression and this translates into ownership of her future career opportunities.

Sarah feels she 'fell into' social work and still thinks she might have taken a more academic route or that this or teaching might be a possibility for the future. But perhaps as a feature of working in the NHS where social workers are a minority, social work identity is now important to Sarah and is something she encourages for others through her work with newly qualified social work colleagues. Establishment of social work-self is now an important function of CPD for Sarah.

Sarah's story so far has been highly facilitative of her learning and of her independence. The voice of her parents encourages and models value in academic development but this seems to come without pressure of expectation and it seems Sarah has space to find other pathways for development.

In my 'thank you' email to Sarah, I expressed my sincere gratitude and mentioned that if my experience or contacts might ever be of use to her, I'd be pleased to hear from her. Sarah thanked me politely but our contact since then has been restricted to an occasional 'Like' on Twitter.

Stephen

Stephen is 31-40 years. He is White British and has been practising as a social worker for 5 years. Stephen currently works as an agency social worker in adult disability teams

Stephen was recruited through Twitter. I didn't know him but he told me that he knows of me through social work friends. Coincidentally, since the interview, I have met up with Stephen at a social work wedding.

Stephen has dyslexia and he explained the impact this has on the way he thinks. He took his time to think through what he wanted to say and there were long pauses. I felt that after an unsure start, Stephen began to trust that I wasn't going to interrupt him began to enjoy being given the time that he needed. I wondered how usual it is for him to experience this. Certainly, at the end of the interview, he talked about the very special experience of having been listened to. Later, he tweeted about this.

While he was talking, I thought Stephen was offering a blueprint for how a trainer should behave. It was only later I realised that he was describing his own experience of feeling undermined by the trainer's approach and connecting this to his challenge of overcoming dyslexia and learning with dyslexia at school.

Stephen has a master's degree and is rightly proud of his academic achievements. He was given help to manage dyslexia in his teens but until then, school was difficult. Stephen is keenly aware of the power dynamic in a classroom and finds the didactic 'teacher knows best' approach to be unhelpful and undermining. He needs to engage in a way that works for him and this cannot be dictated by the teacher; rather there needs to be a coproduction of learning approach in the classroom. But there also needs to be a level of authenticity. It does not work for Stephen to have outside trainers speaking to principles that do not connect to the practice of the organisation. This need for a clear linear connection to the organisation may be part of the way Stephen manages his dyslexia but what is notable from his interview is the strength of emotion when he talks about any trainers other than those he trusts (internal trainers/Principal Social Worker) suggesting how easily he can be transported back to his classroom experience as he replays the emotions he felt as a child struggling in school. Stephen talks about enjoying the reflective space of the classroom as this provides space in which to think properly but perhaps the pressure of an outsider placing unreasonable expectations can hinder this process, to the extent that Stephen talks about the need to set up boundaries to protect himself from the trainer.

To survive at school, Stephen had to be very engaged so his enthusiasm for learning has been developed from early in his life. He received good help at school but learning was very difficult until around the age of thirteen years when he became interested in reading and school became easier. Until this time, he had a constant feeling of not being quick enough and had to face the frustration this caused in his teachers and parents. Stephen's mother is also dyslexic so although he notes that she didn't get the help that benefitted him, she was able to understand his difficulties and always offered supportive kindness. Stephen coped with his difficulties by developing the imaginative side of his brain. Then as a teenager at college, he realised he had an ability to focus in on a task in a way that others did not.

'so I think at that point, dyslexia stopped being my ... disability and started being my superpower because I had a strength there rather than a weakness and I was not so good at a lot of things as other people but there was something I could really be good at if I put my mind to it.'

This shows how successfully Stephen has rescripted his early educational experience; by declaring his dyslexia as a difference and locating the difficulties in others, Stephen has been able to reframe his dyslexia and is now the only one in his family who has studied at master's level .

Stephen wants to continue developing. His family are Christians and Stephen says this has informed a thoughtful approach to life that looks beyond surface level and maintains a clarity around values that permeates through his family. I wondered whether he came to the interview in the hope of future support. I would be happy to give this to him. In the discussion after the interview, he told me about his MA dissertation and when I said it sounded interesting, offered to send it for me to read. Which I have now done.

Tina

Tina is 51-60 years. She is White British and has been practising as a social worker for 4 years. Previously, she had been successful in a completely different career but took the opportunity to re-train when it arose.]

Tina is a fellow student on my doctoral course. She also answered my request to be a 'trial run' whose data would be used if the interview went to plan. We spent the first two years of our course together but Tina had taken this year as a 'rest' while she changed jobs so we were no longer at the same stage. Before start of her interview, Tina made it clear that she would be coming back to the course in September as her job situation is now settled. We are a small group and I was pleased to hear this.

Tina's was my first interview. Before the interview, I was excited and nervous with a worry about technology and whether this would let me down. I spent the minutes before Tina arrived downloading an app to back up my digital recorder.

Tina came straight to the room a few minutes before I was due to go and find her in reception. I hadn't doubted she would come but was very pleased to see her. Tina said she hadn't thought much about doing the interview beforehand but once on the train, had become unaccountably nervous. We laughed about me transmitting my nerves to her and talked about her being a pilot and my gratitude.

Tina's story resonated with my own in that she grew up in a family with limited educational ambition so there was limited support or recognition for Tina's desire to develop either academically or in her career. From her husband and his family however, Tina has found this encouragement and is now realising her desire to explore her own potential. But the sense of being an outsider prevails; just as she felt excluded from the privileged learner set while she was growing up. Her first post qualifying role was in an NHS team where she was the only social worker. Social work CPD opportunities were limited and the outsider feeling that she might be missing out continued.

Before she became a social worker, CPD was not something she had ever considered; she would either have gone on a training course or would have learned 'on the job' but since studying for her MA in social work, she has become aware of the need to ground actions and decisions in theoretical understanding and best practice so on qualifying and finding herself isolated as a social worker, she took action by joining a private supervision group. It was the coordinator there who suggested Tina would be interested in the doctorate. Yet the imposter feeling continues with Tina's sense that others are better equipped to study at this level than her.

Tina has been qualified for four years but is aware that people assume that because of her age, she will have been practising for longer. This reinforces her wish to know that her practice is considered and informed but actually, Tina says she is constantly striving to be the best she can be and takes responsibility for her own CPD not just by enrolling for the doctorate programme but by looking out for learning opportunities such as reading social work magazines or noting any events being advertised on the notice board. It has been a surprise to Tina to realise this is not a general part of social work culture.

Tina looked away from me throughout the interview. At the end of interview, Tina said she couldn't look at me whilst talking; it was too personal. She hadn't expected thinking about CPD to be such an emotional process, particularly when thinking about her own reasons for pursuing CPD and when talking about her husband. The environment played a strong part in this interview I was aware of the significance of us being at The Tavistock as this is where Tina has studied but Tina and I were also aware that the room is often used as a therapy room and this seemed to give an added thoughtfulness to Tina's narrative.

Tina recognises the element of luck in her life; well-timed redundancy meant she was able to retrain as a social worker. A supportive partner meant she was able to take the time and was given the encouragement needed to do this properly. These compensatory experiences have helped Tina move on from her un-facilitative early education environment and enabled her to develop in the way she has always hoped. But the internal message that was formed when she was a child cannot be shaken away; professional development and intellectual pursuits are really the domain of others; despite the love and support of her partner, Tina can only really be a visitor in this promised land.

Tina said she was surprised at the things that had come into her head but one thing was clear; she was going to go home tonight and thank her husband for supporting her through her MA and re-training.

The Data

The answers to the three research questions as suggested by the interview data are presented here as the themes that arose through analysis.

Q1 how do biographical influences affect our approach to CPD?

This section seeks to understand what elements of the biographies of the participants have had the most implications for their subsequent and future learning.

Impacted by childhood

Notably, when talking about their experience of CPD, all participants also spoke about their childhood experiences. John's description was restricted to his traumatic school experience but the other participants all talked about both school and childhood experience of family.

Jackie describes her family as working class but with higher standards. School didn't challenge and expected very little from her. Jackie has five sisters and as teenagers, she says they related to the issues of hierarchy and status explored by Jane Austen in *Pride and Prejudice*.

'she was a bit ahead of her time in what she wrote. She talked about hierarchy of the day, you know, the status factor. She wrote in I think quite a forward-thinking way about women

and their inability to move beyond what society had set for them and we understood how, you know, those, those, those ladies in Pride and Prejudice were just as trapped as people in the lower classes

we kind of maybe also parallel as there was like 6 of us, yes, 6 girls and 5 of them, the Bennet girls in Pride and Prejudice and you know, it was very interesting, we kind of made these comparisons because even though we were in a kind of working class family, our standards weren't working class in terms of how our parents looked at us, their expectations of us and the way they made us speak'

It may be that Jackie and her sisters were unconsciously defending themselves against the low expectations for black girls in racist Britain of the 1980s by focussing on barriers of class instead of race. But it may also be that Jackie was protecting me as a white researcher from the realities of the racism she experienced. Jackie's parent's response to these realities and barriers was to create their own opportunities and standards and Jackie recognises her parents as her first teachers and the learning to have been self-generated from home.

Jackie sees life as a journey that must be enjoyed through experience and development but also through the leaving of a legacy. Her faith tells her we're being 'watched' and don't want to fail at this. School let her down but Jackie's family refused to allow her to sink into the unfairness of this, establishing weekend school, church and community activities as well as bible study in the evening with her sisters. Jackie watched her parents succeed in the way that mattered to them in the face of the racism and exclusion they encountered. As a result, she won't allow herself to be excluded; she chooses not to see it and brings out the best in those around her by expecting the best.

Jules grew up with her three brothers. Her father taught in a school for children with special educational needs and Jules describes her mother as taking a traditional role in the home.

'... dad would have that whole attitude of he's been at work all day and mum would always do all the cooking and all the cleaning. Kind of, quite traditional gender roles really. Em, Yeah, so that's, that and then, that helped me not want to do that; not want to be a stay at home mum really. Yeah. I don't know. It made me into a feminist really is ultimately what I'm trying to say really.'

Jules had an undiagnosed hearing impairment and would be told off for shouting. She understands this in terms of gender placement; girls shouldn't be loud. But her loudness may have also been a way of being heard amongst her brothers and a determination to not be left in the kitchen with her mum. Certainly, she's interested in a more gender-neutral approach to life now.

'Yeah, I remember quite clearly, when I was doing my homework and if I needed to spell a word, I'd ask my dad and he'd say 'go and look it up in the dictionary' which is great like I'm and I think that's probably is one of the reasons why I'm active in my own learning and development I suppose ... actually, my mum can spell really well and is really intelligent, but

we'd never go to her for something like this; another gendered thing where we would ask dad the answer.'

Sarah describes herself as self-sufficient. As a child, she was put in charge of her younger cousins and she uses words like 'bossy' and 'leadership' to describe her younger self. It's not clear whether these were her words or those others used about her but it seems Sarah's narrative of herself as being practically capable and caring as well as bright was established at an early age.

'I was always quite confident and bossy I was always in charge of my little sister. So, I'm someone who took leadership where I could. I suppose I saw part of that as being self-sufficient. So maybe I was someone who didn't lean on people too much for advice and support. But maybe because I was quite academic and quite proactive. If I didn't know something, I'd find another way that I maybe felt was easier; you know, I'd read a bit more rather than go and ask a question. I suppose I saw that as the better option.'

John and Mia's biographical narratives seem to connect to dissatisfaction experienced now; John didn't feel visible at school, believing he was overlooked because he wasn't a troublemaker. But he was bullied with a violence that prevented any positive engagement with school and was to have a profound effect on his mental health as an adult. He now manages a large social work team but has a diagnosis of bi-polar disorder and finds it hard to recognise his own achievements or, on some days, to manage his mood. John's state of mind is vulnerable. He punishes himself as the bullies punished him at school and struggles to maintain self-regard. He's aware of this and of the connection to his school experience.

'So, I've spent an awful lot of time looking at me. And it hurts. And I've had enough pain in my life; historically physical pain and then emotional pain. Right? I don't mind a bit of pain (laughs) I'm applying pain to myself, it's no longer somebody else doing it to me. So that's all right isn't it? (laughs) you know. So, if I'm applying the pain to myself and I'm learning from it, that's a good thing. Right? So I can have a restriction and a limit over how much pain I apply to myself, right? And I can recognise when I'm applying too much and stop.'

Mia's father has been a strong influence.

'My dad's a scientist. He's a PhD. He's really intelligent and enjoys his work a lot. He helped me a lot at school and motivated me a lot as well. We'd just do lots of things together. He'd help me with maths and science projects as well and then just general, like outside of school help as well. My mum's not qualified. She worked a lot but wasn't qualified. So it's a bit mixed. Em, yeah, I've been thinking lately actually how valued it was in our family and how much it was pushed. We were pushed we were encouraged but not pushed and I've been considering whether I wish I was pushed a bit more (laughs) em...'

There's a tone of regret in Mia's words; perhaps an idea that she should have worked harder at school. If the blueprint for success in Mia's family is a science PhD, it may be hard for other less positivistic achievements to be recognised. and it's notable that when Mia talks about her professional development, it is in terms of definable knowledge; legislation, policy and procedures, not the more nebulous reflective and relational skills also associated with social work. Mia describes her pleasure in the school projects where she was able to take control and design her own work. When talking about her student placements, Mia expresses frustration about when she was over-protected and when talking about her work now, Mia is motivated to have been asked to set up peer learning groups. Mia seems to like to be in control of her life yet the regret alluded to above seemed to me as interviewer to be a theme throughout the interview.

For Jules and Sarah, their biographical narratives were sources of motivation. Jules's brother became very unwell and experienced psychosis during their adolescence. Jules stepped up to the role of leading on supporting him and her parents through this very frightening time. She sees this experience as having been pivotal in her becoming a social worker.

'I sort of felt I knew it intuitively. I knew about how to support him and how to support my parents with that. I'm very open that that's why I'm a social worker really cos I think it's really important'

Jules's brother experienced an 'awful' social worker who called him 'fruit loops'. Having seen it done badly, Jules is determined to do social work well.

'and I think that's why I put quite a lot of emphasis on, on being a social worker and being really interested in it like, I want to be the best that I can be. I'm also really competitive so there is an element of me wanting to know all the things and em, I can't just be a social worker like this, I have to do all of it'

Sarah's family valued learning and her parents were studying while she was at home, creating powerful role models. Perhaps as a result, Sarah is organised and pragmatic about her CPD. Realistically she notes, it is easier for her to study whilst she has no other responsibilities but study is a good thing. She enjoyed it at school, knows how to get what she needs from the tutors and understands its value in helping her to progress her career and keeping her options open. Sarah's sister didn't fit into the 'easy-learning' mould, she struggled at school so it seemed the sisters were cast into family roles; Sarah as academic, her sister as not. Here, Sarah reflects on how much of her comfort with learning is actually down to the family's comparison rather than her own particular academic ability and the impact this has had.

'She was the opposite (laughs) she was crying about maths homework every night and tantrums. She wasn't very academic at all. Maybe that's one of the reasons I see myself as quite academic not necessarily that I was, just that I took to this stuff and she didn't and there was always that comparison 'Sarah will do her homework and read the books and it was fine'. Maybe I saw that as someone who took really well to school. I thought it was ok

but was comparing myself to someone who was kicking and screaming. And I suppose that comparison was always made by my family

It suits me and I like it and I'm now able like you say, I'm doing things I want to do. I'm choosing to do them and I really do feel like I've got ownership of that now. Back at school, I was very much expected by teachers and parents that you would do A levels and go to university whereas now I feel like I'm doing I want to do. If anything, it feels empowering; I'm being given the space to do it.'

Inner Voice

What all the participants seem to have in common is the presence of an inner voice, perhaps that of a parent, that influences their approach to learning. These voices are not always helpful.

Aysun's reference to her family is in relation to her internal battle with perfectionism.

'my teacher family members ... are like that I guess, perfectionists, you have to do it, they show you how to do it perfect... So, I grew up a perfectionist. I was a perfectionist, so I refuse to be one. I am conscious of it. I refuse to be a perfectionist now. And, but I still take pride in my life, in what I do'

Aysun's move from her original country to the UK may have been in part, an expression of her determination to free herself from her family's expectation but the contradiction hinted at here may be an indication of the lasting impact of family members in the form of an inner voice that continues to drive her to perfectionism.

It is in Jackie's data that the idea of an inner voice is most explicit. Hers is that of her parents telling her that she must take responsibility for her own development.

'There's no way of getting away from that, because I had that set on me as a child, I believe that the onus is on me to do it. It's not up to somebody else then to progress me, I need to progress myself, um, you know, the teacher can, the tutors and lecturers, they can only do so much We can use them for guidance but then we have ultimately to go and find our own path in it.'

Jackie's parents would not allow her to be a victim to the racist attitudes of the school and instead of talking about what school did not do for her, Jackie speaks with pride about the Saturday schools run by the Caribbean churches. Here, standards were high, children were expected to work hard and challenge themselves academically and socially. That message seems to be deeply implanted in Jackie who does not dwell on the very evident discrimination she experienced at school. Instead, she talks about the compassion and support she has received from those who have taken interest and invested time and thought into her development.

Jackie's father was a pastor in the Protestant Evangelical church that her family attended twice every Sunday. Her parents both '*cared for others when people weren't looking*' and continued to help others long into retirement. Jackie sees both her mother and father as lifelong role models.

'My father was someone who was always in the limelight as he was a pastor..... It was that kind of values about helping and serving and being on the world to do good for others. So, you're not just here to do good for yourself. I think those kinds of values were very clear in my early life. And my father, he's gone now god bless him but even after he er, retired, he was still in, even in his late 60s, he was driving for the disabled association. He never sat down, he refused to not contribute to the works and to others and for me, that's social work values and that's where I learned those. My mother now in her late 70s, still goes to visit people who are in mental health hospitals, some of her friends as frail as she is, she's still doing that now'

Sarah's family valued learning. They were actively involved with her school and encouraged their daughters to read, ask questions, learn plant names and so on. Sarah was eleven years old when her parents started higher education courses and they were busy but made the time for her whenever she needed them. The model they established is that higher education is attainable, even whilst working but it isn't essential. Sarah is naturally academic, so happy to study but the inner voice of her parents seems to offer a healthy, laid back attitude towards this.

'You know, we weren't a family where that was seen as something like miles away but it also wasn't something that you had to do; I don't come from a family where everyone's been to university. And I suppose that's been kind of helpful and I suppose me doing this now, my dad's only 2 years ago got his master's degree in nursing so then he did that alongside full time work so I suppose in a way that's a bit of a motivation that you can kind of carry on at any age or in his case, disappear from academia for years and years and then have to come back to it. Yeah, so I suppose it's good to, that it's seen as something that any of us can achieve but also, it's not something that you have to achieve so I suppose it's quite a healthy attitude to it. I don't suppose they'd be devastated if I didn't complete my masters but also, I know that they wouldn't doubt that I could.'

Jules's values seem to have come from her father. She describes annoyance at a social worker entrepreneur who is making a private business out of social work. Her father's left-wing views would presumably not have supported this as a model. She enjoyed his approach to teaching; bringing things to life; '*castles and that sort of stuff*' and is pleased to see him continue this tradition with his grandchildren. Jules refers to being angry with her father and seems to want to reject much of his approach yet his influence is apparent throughout. As she's speaking, this seems to become more apparent to Jules

'I actually, em, I think I'm gonna have to give him a call. I'm quite about my dad in lots of ways but I'm getting this from this chat with you that he laid the foundations really.'

Jules seems to simultaneously consciously reject and unconsciously identify with her father. Object relations theory helps to understand these continuing internal, ambivalent feelings in which Jules describes her anger with whilst also speaking admiringly about (and to some extent, replicating), her father's values and his approach to teaching young children. The therapeutic dimension to the interview emerges as Jules seems to shift from a more paranoid schizoid stance of splitting towards a more depressive position of a tolerable conscious ambivalence, recognising good and bad father as being part of the same whole.

Stephen's family are church-going Christians with a culture of thinking at a deeper level and a value system that prizes personal growth and understanding. His siblings both have degrees but it's Stephen who with the challenge of dyslexia has taken his studies to master's level and continues to look for opportunities to develop academically.

'I guess there's a culture in my family about a value system about thinking deeply about stuff. There's a strong family ethic about you don't just come at life at a surface level, there's something beneath that and it's with thinking about that in any given situation and I guess that is part of our family culture. And I guess one of the things about my wife, the reason I'm married to her is that she takes the same approach so yeah, I think that's probably, erm, a feature of the background that I come from. I think that's set me up to approach that in that way I guess'

The message from Stephen's family has been that learning and questioning is to be valued. He sees this has having influenced his choice of partner as well as his career path. But the helpful message that seems to have become Stephen's dominant internal voice is that his dyslexia is a hurdle not a blocker to his success

Tina questions her internal voice.

'It was almost as though, well get a secure job then just stay there and that's be it. I don't think from any malicious point of view that that was suggested; that's just how things were I've been lucky but that encouragement to learn, thinking about it, has been quite an issue in my life. And I've been trying to prove myself to other people. I am a bit concerned about what other people think ... '

Despite her high academic achievements, Tina doesn't recognise herself as part of what she sees as an exclusive group of bright people; her internal voice seems to tell her she's an imposter. The low expectations of her family and her school have shaped her view of self; she's an uninvited guest at a gathering of gifted and talented folk but still determined to get more out of learning and of life and continues to push herself to develop and rescript her childhood experience.

Rescripting

Where early learning experiences were not positive, the participants spoke about Rescripting patterns of learning.

John is drawn to self-development but his violent school experience has rendered learning a painful process and he's determined not to replicate this in any way. He is now scornful of traditional approaches to learning which don't carry meaning for him.

'this stuff is chucked at you, suck it up and regurgitate it in an exam. Right? I don't see the benefit in that. Yeah, it's taught you nothing. It's taught you how to regurgitate. I can learn anything from a text book, I can regurgitate. I can do an assignment. I can do an assignment standing on my head. Do a bit of background reading I can write it overnight. I understand the rules'

The voice of John as a child is present in much of what he says and is a striking contrast with his appearance as a grown man. He wants to feel noticed and valued but can't so wants to minimise his vulnerability by being in control of what he does. He holds a responsible job, is physically big and looks powerful. He is aware of the juxtaposition of how he feels and how he looks. John finished school with low expectations of education and perhaps of life and went into a manual job working on a farm. When he felt ready to try again, he was surprised to find teachers who were inspirational and encouraging. Learning with a group of people for whom school also hadn't worked and being offered recognition and feedback from the teachers meant learning began to work for him. He describes internalising good feedback and the positive impact this has had.

His determination brought him back to education. He started on an Access course, did a BSc in social work and then an MSc.

'So, I had to re-visit all my learning when I wanted to do it and when I was you know, keen to do it. And interestingly, doing my access course, I remember a lot of the people who taught me on that because it was memorable. Right? And obtained a lot of confidence from it cos when you think you're stupid Right? When you come out of school thinking you're thick and dumb, right? That's not helpful in any part of your life so to go to somewhere to choose to change that, it's quite a big step. And then when you go to choose to do that and to change it and to take a big step, the people there are brilliant and wonderful and encouraging That's amazing. cos you come out of there feeling confident. That's how I should have felt when I left school. You know, why didn't I leave school feeling that? I'm angry about that and it carries with me until now You know, it's led to so many problems and my self-doubt and questioning is all based on that. Yeah? When you're quiet as a mouse, which I'm certainly not now (laughs) you know? When you're quiet as a mouse, nobody pays you any attention and when you get a hiding every time you go into a games lesson right? I got used to taking a kicking so my learning, so you know, my learning has come with some pain.'

John sees similarities between his experience at school and his experience of being detained under the Mental Health Act; both were brutal and inhumane and his priority is to stop anyone else experiencing similar. John is successful in his senior role but the messages from

his subsequent learning and development have not been enough to eradicate school. He cannot accept his ability and is constantly waiting to be 'given the sack'.

Despite his subsequent academic and professional success, John has not managed to rescript his own school experience and continues to be vulnerable but he has paid for his own children to go to private school in a clear attempt to avoid his own experiences being replayed through them.

Tina is aware of the randomness of luck; bad fortune in going to a low aspirational school, good fortune in meeting her husband who supports her educational ambition and good news in her redundancy from her first career meaning no worry about bills when training for her second career as a social worker. Tina wants to do and be the best she can in social work. She's aware and curious about her drive to learn but also her lack of confidence. Tina regrets that she wasn't pushed by her family or school and she's now determined to rescript this so is working hard to seize as much as she can in terms of development and growth. Tina feels she was put into a box at an early age by school as well as by her family's lack of ambition and says she's determined to prove those people wrong.

'I don't think that I can be alone in being driven to try and improve myself or learn Even though or perhaps because this wasn't something that was part of the culture of my family or upbringing my secondary school, there was, it was assumed that people had a lack of ambition to do things So perhaps I'm driven by I've had to prove people wrong; you know it, isn't the case; people can learn. We can all change, we can progress'

Although Tina says little about her own family, there are clues about her family life in the way she describes her husband's. His was a nurturing family full of positive, happy support.

'I'm very, very lucky. I'm married to such a lovely man who isn't at all concerned about what other people think He had tremendous, wonderful, wonderful parents, they were very into sport. He was brought up in this wonderful family. They were so happy; their default was smiling and laughing and he's just got one sister so two children were brought up in this big house where their grandma lived with them, they were just sort of so kind and supportive and ... they were always ... even sort of family tragedies were dealt with and they would all just support each other really well so both he and his sister have grown to be adults who really can cope with dreadful family tragedies and still remain sort of very, you know decent and loving people. So, em, he's very different to me. His memories of his childhood are overwhelmingly happy ones of playing cricket and holidays and going out so you know, his childhood is quite a contrast to mine where you know, I don't remember, my memories of childhood really aren't lots of happy days and things.'

Tina's description of her husband's family seems to reinforce her sense that there is a better way and she has missed it. She seems disappointed that her family didn't encourage her to develop in the way she would have liked and envious of her husband's supportive background. If this is the case, Tina's success in creating a family life that's so closely aligned to the one she sees as well as shaping her study and her career in such a purposeful way,

seems to be an indication that she is successfully rescripting her own narrative in terms of her home life as well as her learning.

Repeating

Not all participants suggested a need to change the patterns laid down in childhood. Where these had been successful, participants described themselves repeating their learning patterns. Sarah found school easy. She took well to revision and exams, has faith in the education system and is currently following a modular academic path towards a master's degree. For her, the route is well trodden and it works. Sarah describes herself as having always been curious; she read a lot, talked a lot and was interested. Through the interview, she reflected more on how her parents may have impacted on this.

'maybe it's more inherent than I recognised because they [parents] would always have you reading and asking you questions, and dad would be teaching me plant names and things. I suppose we were a family that valued learning and that suited me, so I assumed I fell into it very easily but maybe it was that I had the right environment for that, and it suited me. It just sort of matched up. There was someone who always made time for work and they were involved with school and it was just made to feel important and useful. I guess something you should put the time into, so I guess maybe my personality suited it and met the kind of approach at home to learning.'

Learning was also easy for Jules. It was blended into her family life. Her father would discuss socialism and the meanings of political song lyrics with her and on Saturdays, he would take her to the Quaker bookshop where she would immerse herself in books. He encouraged her to learn but to be self-sufficient in this. This approach to learning is replayed in a very obvious way; Jules describes taking her iPad into training sessions so she can follow references made and clarify anything she's not completely clear about but if this is Jules repeating the patterns laid down as a child, she isn't aware of it as she credits this activity to having been given an iPad by her employer. Perhaps unconsciously, Jules is trying to spread her father's approach to learning to the next generation.

'It's funny, when I deliver training, I bring all my books, like I've got a suitcase on wheels and I bring everything to the training and I set it all up and I try to encourage people to come and take a look and most of the time, nobody comes to look and I find that, like, I think books are really important. I really love books. I really love books. Like, if I went to training and they had that, I'd be like, d'you know, well I guess everyone's different aren't they.'

Modelled by her father, learning and development has been a part of day to day life for Jules who enjoys it for its own intrinsic value. She is now frustrated when others don't share her interest and to see it quantified for registration purposes.

looking for Purpose

Aysun was also disappointed when fellow students did not share her excitement and enthusiasm for learning. But Aysun has been disappointed by the reality of social work practice too.

'I was in [university] and I was going to study social work. And I did study social work. It wasn't easy. Em, with young kids, not a very happy marriage. And of course, me personally, I was going through my own questioning, thinking, my existence having an existential crisis I was going through myself and English not being your first language, you know, all those things I had but because I was really interested in what I was learning and I really had my heart in it, em, I loved it. I loved sitting at the lectures, listening to my tutors (laughs) Then I graduated. Then I took my job as a hospital social worker. There I started and from that point 'til now, my experience of social work has not been what I thought it was gonna be

and, especially during em ... uni years, they don't really tell you about, you know, how you operate as a social worker in real life. You do get glimpses of it but no it's all theory, theory, theory which is great but when I started as a hospital social worker, it was, again, I have to emphasise that I never took a job before, you know, I was a student before and a housewife

Aysun says little in her interview about her childhood but there may be meaning in her comments about the perfectionism of the teachers in her family that relate to high or unrealistic expectations of herself. If Aysun has been seeking the approval and approbation lacking when a child, she didn't find it during her ASYE as her assessor was too busy to give her full feedback. She also is not finding it now in feedback from her managers who are too busy to comment on her assessments. Where Aysun did consider herself to thrive was at university, where the feedback and grade is clearly presented. When given an excellent grade, Aysun can believe herself to be doing well and is able to respond positively to her inner critical/perfectionist voice. This is not so straightforward in the messiness of practice. Aysun can remember the excitement of learning at university but this doesn't seem to connect to the CPD she describes now. If previous learning represented a path away from an unsatisfactory present, might CPD entrench her further in what she's doing?

Mia works in a progressive local authority but mentioned checking neighbouring boroughs to see whether anything better going on there. Her scientist father may influence her approach to learning.

'So I'm quite interested in health and science and research. I've been looking a bit at meditation and the science behind that so I read New Scientist and other articles often from Facebook. I went to New Scientist conference the other day, well the other month, which I found really interesting. I was hoping it would be something really practical that I could apply to social work. It wasn't particularly but it was really interesting. Mmmm.... and.... I don't know, I often wonder what it would be like in a different borough but I really like X and I

don't want to leave it and you know, the grass is greener. But I don't have a huge amount to compare it with.'

Mia describes herself as a 'people pleaser' and there does seem to be some self-doubt, not least in her belief that despite having practiced across two continents, she doesn't have sufficient awareness of social work for comparison. But if it took her father grit and determination to complete a PhD and forge a successful career as a scientist, Mia has shown that she has this too; ultimately, she was able to leave her home country and create a new life for herself in the UK. Mia's determination is also shown in her success in having learnt to play the piano. She did this in her own way, using methods that didn't meet her family's approval as they would have preferred her to take a more theoretical approach but Mia has forged her own musical path and is now an accomplished pianist, albeit one who still seems to be looking around to see what others in her family are doing and thinking they are doing it better.

Living Parents' Script?

Mia and Sarah's narratives offer suggestions of conscious (Mia) and unconscious (Sarah) influence from their families in their choice of social work as a career. Mia is Antipodean but came to London while on a trip around Europe, decided to stay and has made a life here. Mia presents this and other major decisions in her life as having been taken lightly but heavily influenced by others.

'when I was leaving school, I didn't really know what I wanted to do. My auntie, she's an OT so I spoke to her about that, for some reason I didn't pick that up and now I can't remember why not. But then, I was just saying to my sister, 'I just want to do something working with people' and she suggested social work cos she was saying it's quite broad, you can go into different areas. Em, so I looked into it and I studied it and, to be honest, while I was studying it, I didn't enjoy it, I kept thinking 'what else can I do?' and 'I don't know if this is for me'. And it's taken quite a while to really settle into it I think.'

Sarah enjoyed studying, 'unpicking' and exploring things academically.

'And I felt the same about sociology; I thought this stuff is really interesting. It's not the maths and English I've been doing my whole life. You know, you're questioning things and you're analysing things a bit more and you're reflecting on stuff and you just weren't when you were kind of. Just recalling information, I suppose, for the majority of school and then you're starting to be pushed to analyse things and be critically reflective for a bit when you're doing things like philosophy and sociology and that helped me I think., It was a different approach to learning and that really suits me.'

Sarah was tempted by academia but pragmatically, thought she couldn't keep doing that for ever. This may have been the influence of her parents who are both in the practical career of nursing. Sarah said her parents' experience confirmed she didn't want to be a nurse. The beginning of her social work training didn't look promising but then it 'stuck' and she decided she had made the right decision. But Sarah also had a younger sister and talked

about the responsibility this brought and her role in being in charge of her sister and other young family members. It may be the path of being an older sister that has kept her tied to a practical/people focussed career like social work.

What about biographies has the most implications?

Specific biographical experiences have significant impact on participant's current approach to CPD.

School gave nothing to Jackie. As a black child in a 1980s inner-city school, teachers seemed to have no expectations of her. Jackie describes it as boring and uninspiring; one teacher called the girls 'slags' and others smelled of alcohol.

'..... this is why I was able to excel once I left school. Because school was so anti everything I kind of was coming from. It was anti the values I knew. I went to an east London comp back in the 80s and not the best one either. Not the worst, but not the best and um, it was the place I went. I didn't enjoy school at all and um, it.. which is probably why I didn't believe I could learn or that I had academic excellence. Where I did my, the majority of my learning was through my sisters, my parents too but also my sisters who.. ok, let me just take a step back. So from the church, we also had like, Saturday schools so we would go to Saturday school which was a huge thing back in the 80s and 90s. Caribbean churches ran Saturday schools and the level was kind of grammar level. Grammar school. It was good, really high education and there was also, what was lacking in the school for particular people who looked like me, I think that's the nicest way to say it, there was no expectation of me. But certainly, at home, my parents had an expectation of me There was an expectation in terms of how I lived my life.... I had a standard to meet at home.'

Critical realism locates structural forces of racism within the 'domains of real'; we may not be able to see racism but we know it exists and can see its impact. Jackie's family were obstructed by racist forces but their response has been to effectively say 'we'll find our way through this'. Without ever naming what it is she must navigate in terms of racism, Jackie projects a warm, positive, aspirational and hopeful approach and for Jackie, this seems to have been a largely successful means to cope with the destructiveness of racism.

It is since these interviews that the killing of George Floyd by a police officer in Minnesota has led to international protests and the prominence of the Black Lives Matter movement. The force of racism that was not universally named is now being both named and examined and may result in a freeing of the will to call out and rise up in protest against this insidious structural force that has been so restricting and damaging. Had this interview taken place after George Floyd's death, there may have been more open acknowledgement of the structural challenges that have been a part of Jackie's life.

Stephen's school experience was defined by his dyslexia.

'I'm dyslexic. In order to survive at school, I had to be very engaged or I wouldn't have survived. so yes. Being engaged and enthusiastic about learning has come from a very, very early place for me.'

With support, Stephen has found ways around the challenges created by dyslexia.

'I think at a certain point I realised what I had the ability to do was to really focus on things in the way that other people couldn't. I had this real strong sense of being able to home in on something and teachers would say 'oh, you're really good at being able to stay on task' and I didn't realise that other people weren't. I think it's just something that I developed as a coping mechanism, I realised that if I did really practice something, I could get to be really good at it ... so I think at that point, dyslexia stopped being my ... disability and started being my superpower because I had a strength there rather than a weakness and I was not so good at a lot of things as other people but there was something I could really be good at if I put my mind to it.'

But school was hard as Stephen's dyslexia preventing him from working to the same pace as others. Sitting in class was an ordeal, he sensed his teachers and parents' frustration and felt apologetic about this.

'There's a certain amount of frustration that you're facing from teachers and from parents cos you're taking a lot longer to get to grips with things than might be expected and the ...looking back on it, that frustration's not directed at you but you still experience it present with you or I think you kind of feel em...or at least I felt apologetic about where I was at with things because I was experiencing people being frustrated about me quite often and I didn't like people being frustrated so there was that sort of feeling.....um..... I think I spent a lot of time um..... to compensate for the fact that I wasn't very academic at that point. I think I developed the imaginative side of my brain I guess cos that was something that I could do really well and it wasn't something that people could judge, you can't measure that in the same way as academic achievements so that was something that I found that I was good at and I enjoyed myself doing and I didn't find myself frustrated by. So, I developed that side of things. I guess that sort of matched being inquisitive and curious because that kind of engaged your brain in imagining how the world might be and then finding out whether it's that way or not. Em.....'

There's a kindness to the frustration described here. Stephen's experience was of adults being troubled rather than annoyed at his difficulty. His response was to want to find a way to succeed. Things began to fall into place for him when aged 13/14 years, he found that he enjoyed reading. He describes creating alternative ways to think and learn, developing the imaginative side of his brain to compensate for the impact of his dyslexia. This creative way of tackling tasks brought a different perspective and one that came to be highly valued by others. Stephen's response to those adults who wanted to see him succeed was to find an alternative path, imagining how the world might be and then finding out whether it was that way or not and this seems to have worked well for him. Reading and learning in a classroom situation is no longer the ordeal it once was but is a sanctuary, an ordered corner of a disordered and chaotic world in which he can approach his thinking in

the linear fashion that better suits his mind. Stephen describes himself on his Twitter feed as 'Dyslexic'. This is an integral and it seems now comfortable part of his identity.

Diversity/feeling different

The experience of feeling different, both in childhood and as an adult, is common and connects to participant's experiences of CPD now.

Jackie's parent's response to the racism and exclusion they faced on arrival in the UK was to create their own churches and educate their own children. It was the church schools that compensated for the structural racism and neglect that Jackie experienced in her state school.

This seems to have been the blueprint for Jackie's '10% from others, 90% from yourself' approach to life. It's this ingrained positivity and self-reliance that seems to have protected Jackie from the reality of her school.

'It's funny, I've never even talked about it quite like this but I'm understanding that that's why it just didn't have a major place for me um... I mean some of my teachers were drunk half the time I mean they'd come to school smelling of alcohol. We had one teacher who called us all a bunch of slags. I mean we had it all. It was the east end, what do you want? And so, school was school. You know, this very strange place that I'd go to 5 days a week. Don't much like the teachers. They don't much like me. But I have a life outside of there and um, it was full. I don't feel like I'm missing anything. If anything, school was an interference, it was interference in my real life and that's why it didn't really play a big. It's really funny, it's quite reflective now to think of it but no, I had everything I needed, even in terms of academia, even in terms of being challenged, I had all of that.'

John's fragile mental health renders his state of mind vulnerable. He punishes himself and struggles to maintain good self-regard.

'You know, I want to feel valued. You know, I want to come out feeling like I'm valuable as an asset to the organisation. I wanna feel like I belong. I wanna feel like I'm part of something that kind of carries the same drive and determination that I do. Right? So why do I feel like I might get the sack every 5 minutes? (laughs)...Any ideas? (laughs) ...'

For John, personal and professional development is connected and he's not interested in CPD that doesn't offer some deeper insight and engagement with feelings. John talks about needing to be in control of any learning experience so he can control the level of (painful) impact it has on him but he also seeks some kind of order and boundary in the way he works.

'I'm not a maverick. I'm not working wildly wide of the rules. I'm working with the rules and making them work from people

If I could learn something that made me feel confident about myself, that would be great'

Professional and personal learning and development offers John a hope of reassurance and containment so despite the pain it causes him, he continues to engage.

Jules had a serious hearing impairment that wasn't picked up as a child.

'I'm quite vocal and I grew up with a hearing complaint I didn't know about until I was about 18 and so I've got quite a loud voice. I've had it corrected since. I think like when everyone's chatting, I'd be the one who'd be told off because I have the louder voice and probably because I'm a girl as well so there's that expectation that you behave in a certain way isn't there so, yeah, disruptive but active learner, I think that's a better way of looking at it (laughs). Yeah, I think I've always been like that

Yeah, yeah child of the 80s. I'm one of 4, you just get on with it a little bit. But it was, I had about 5% hearing and I just think I just em, I just managed it, I em I didn't realise that I, I definitely lip read. Like if somebody covers their mouth now. Like I've got about 80% in this ear and this ear's fine but if somebody covers their mouth, I feel like I can't hear them. But I feel like that sort of thing happened right? (laughs) I don't think my parents were that engaged in what was happening for me (laughs) but that's by the by.'

Whether Jules was loud to hear because of her impairment or loud to be heard as the only girl in a family of boys, she felt her difference and compensated by offering more volume or enthusiasm. Her hearing has largely been addressed but Jules still has a sense of hearing like someone who has a sensory need (feels like she can't hear when the speaker covers their mouth). Similarly, Jules no longer lives at home but is still aware of restrictions of assigned gender to the extent that she uses her second, more gender-neutral name. It seems that in the face of potential disadvantage through difference, Jules learned to turn up the volume of her own activity through enthusiastic and energetic engagement. The pattern was established from an early age that Jules would tolerate no barriers and would aim to be the best she can be.

Stephen's dyslexia caused him to think creatively about how he can learn and reframe his dyslexia into a 'superpower'.

'I think I spent a lot of time um ... to compensate for the fact that I wasn't very academic at that point. I think I developed the imaginative side of my brain I guess cos that was something that I could do really well and it wasn't something that people could judge, you can't measure that in the same way as academic achievements so that was something that I found that I was good at and I enjoyed myself doing and I didn't find myself frustrated by. So, I developed that side of things. I guess that sort of matched being inquisitive and curious because that kind of engaged your brain in imagining how the world might be and then finding out whether it's that way or not.'

Sitting in class was an ordeal; Stephen felt he was letting his family and his teachers down until he found his love for reading and the strength in his ability to think differently. But there's an acceptance to the way he describes his childhood experience; perhaps because

his mother also has dyslexia, there was an understanding and a strong will to work with it and this acceptance seems to be replayed now. He declares his difference and is happy to explain what this means.

Tina regards herself as an outsider to what she perceives as a group of well qualified, able learners and works hard to earn herself core member status. My sense is that she doesn't feel she is there yet.

'I sometimes do think that I've struggled to learn things that others seem to find so easy. I do have to take notes about things all the time em, I can't learn without doing that. That's my way of being reminded and em, to grasp something new.....'

Whereas I do work with people who seem to be able to remember things or remember things when they've been on a course without seemingly any effort. I'm a bit envious of that actually. Some people do seem to be able to learn so easily. Em ... perhaps that's just my perception. Perhaps we all have our different ways of learning or appearing to learn ... Em ...'

Although Tina seems determined to rescript her original learning experience, it may be that she's continually replaying her experience from school; whatever the aspirations of those around her, Tina did go to university and established a good career and whatever her thoughts about her own ability, she is working in a highly regarded specialist field and is studying at level 8 but for Tina, the powerful internal pattern is established and she sees herself as less capable than the lucky clever people.

Q2 What internal conditions appear to impact our ability to engage with CPD?

This question began life as 'What makes us take responsibility for our own learning?' until reflective discussion in supervision highlighted the value position associated with this stance. Social work registration requirement for CPD does create an imperative to learn as do statutory obligations of employers but there is likely to be a difference in our will to engage with learning we have chosen and learning imposed upon us. The literature review highlights the work done elsewhere to understand the external influences on ability to engage This section looks to uncover internal processes.

Biographical Influences

The data suggests that biographical influences highlighted in the previous section create an orientation towards education that influences the extent to which these participants take responsibility for their CPD. Just as Aysun feels the pressure of her family's and her own high expectations. She faces the challenge of establishing herself as a single, working parent and has little space to focus upon her own needs. When talking about CPD, she describes her need for self-care, listing basic requirements such as breathing, fresh air and time in the bath.

'I have developed ways to quieten my mind if I need to. Look after myself ... in any way possible. I ... I keep reminding myself that you know ... it's a very common ... saying in English

that you can't pour from an empty cup. Yeah? So I keep reminding myself that so if I feel like things are getting a bit too much, I take my time to just you know, I say, you know, I say 'No'. Even to myself because it's difficult breaking that habit. Now I'm like ok, instead of taking a shower, I'm gonna have a bath I've got a mountain bike I do yoga and I also am learning in my time, in my private time, how to breathe properly (laughs) I know it sounds silly but it's an art to breathe properly. And I am learning, there are so many different techniques of breathing and I can't wait to share those with my social work colleagues. I'm thinking of doing a workshop at work to have, you know, when you feel overwhelmed you know, what kind of breathing technique and bring your stress levels down and if you're struggling with sleep, what kind of breathing app to help you. These kinds of things.'

Aysun connects her need to look after herself at home to her need for CPD; they are one and the same. Whether due to the pressures of her own life, her busy job or her high standards, it seems Aysun may have neglected some of her own basic needs and is taking responsibility now to address this. Aysun emphasises the breathing classes take place in her own time, highlighting that she is not using work time for this development and talks later about the blurring of lines between employer and practitioner led CPD.

'But what they're saying is they want to move away from erm, classroom-based trainings. They want er, social workers to take on the responsibility of their continuing professional development ... Er, but the problem there is, so if I sign up for a training, it's on the system so my calendar 'I'm going for a training, I'm out of office for the day' everyone knows, that's fine. But if I say to my manager 'today I'm just gonna do a little bit of research on this subject and I won't be available'. Is that going to be taken as ok? Is that all right? So, if you want me to take on my professional development, you know, do my learning myself, are you still gonna give me the same time as you would for formal training? I don't know. Nobody answers that question'

The resonances between this and her relationship with school are clear; Aysun loves to learn and develop but her expectations are high and her energy and resource is to be spent on the development she sees as important. At work just as when she was a schoolchild, there is a tension between Aysun and the figures of authority who would impose their expectations upon her but who then might let her down by not meeting the high expectations that she holds of them. Although willing to give her own time to CPD in terms of breathing exercises, Aysun expresses frustration at her employer's blurring of the boundaries by taking professional CPD out of the classroom and is frustrated at the thought that her efforts wouldn't be recognised and time given, recompensed.

For Jules, the boundaries are already blurred. Jules is passionate about social work, wants to be the best possible and is prepared to work hard in her own time to achieve this. CPD is seen as a duty but this can be fitted into bite sized chunks by using blogs and social media to keep up to date and expand her thinking. There are resonances with Jules' description of her father introducing learning into everyday activities. Like Aysun, Jules seems to have a sense that authority figures might support her learning but whilst Jules misses the presence of CPD from supervision and team meetings, her father's encouragement to her and her siblings to

find things out for themselves seems to have developed an expectation of self-sufficiency. Jules enjoys encouragement but will continue with her learning regardless.

'.....I wish there was more of a focus on CPD in my supervision and in team meetings. Like, I think that's bit lacking in the role I have currently and em, most of the formal training I have is sort of the bare minimum of training that we need to be provided by the local authority so, em yeah I find that quite disappointing actually.'

Jules also regrets that local authority learning is restricted to 'need to know' rather than the creative and compelling 'castles and stuff' approach to learning offered by her father. She enjoys feeling competent and confident. Jules remembers being told by her dad to look up words in the dictionary and connects this to her proactivity. Jules sometimes teaches at the university and the positive feedback she receives from the students is important to her.

'I'm getting lots of positive feedback about my enthusiasm for social work and what we do shines through because I feel confident about what we're doing and because I have a variety of sources where I get my information from I suppose. Em.....yeah, so I think CPD's really important to me and em, yeah, plays a big part in my, in my work but also I think in my identity as a social worker as well.'

Like Aysun, Jules refers to an overlap between personal and professional development but relates her need to be the best she can be to her family's experience of services when her brother became unwell as a teenager.

'I'm a social worker because of my family ultimately When he was 19, he [my brother] had his first episode of psychosis and it was really full on. Really difficult, really difficult time for the whole family I sort of felt I knew it intuitively. I knew about how to support him and how to support my parents with that. I'm very open that that's why I'm a social worker really cos I think it's really important, you know.'

There's also a competitive element for Jules having been the only girl in a sibling group of boys.

'I'm also really competitive so there is an element of me wanting to know all the things and em, I can't just be a social worker like this, I have to do all of it which yeah, might be a bit annoying. Yeah.'

Throughout much of her interview, Jules' teacher-father seems to be present. Here she talks about her first job but the way she illustrates her tale with additional factual information is suggestive of the informative way her father might have spoken to her as a child.

'My first job I worked in an approved premise for women offenders like a probation bail hostel thing. And it was called the Elizabeth Fry hostel and Elizabeth Fry used to be on our £5 notes and she was a Quaker and she'd go and give blankets to women in prison and she's yeah, I prefer her to Winston Churchill who's now on the notes. I went to this hostel, I met the manager who I really liked And I was quoting Elizabeth fry at them and they had no idea who she was, and I was like 'we're in her hostel, how can you not know about her?'

During the interview, Jules seems to be realising just how much influence her father has had on her approach to learning.

'I actually, em, I think I'm gonna have to give him a call. I'm quite negative about my dad in lots of ways but I'm getting this from this chat with you that he, those things just like laid the foundations really.'

Mia's father also features in her interview as she talks about having recently attended the New Scientist conference. It is an easy assumption that she is drawn to science because he is a scientist suggesting familiarity amongst scientists and science discussion.

'So I'm quite interested in health and science and research. I've been looking a bit at meditation and the science behind that so I read New Scientist and other articles often from Facebook. I went to New Scientist conference the other day, well the other month, which I found really interesting. I was hoping it would be something really practical that I could apply to social work. It wasn't particularly but it was really interesting.'

Mia's father, like Jules' father had significant influence on her learning how to learn as a child.

'He helped me a lot at school and motivated me a lot as well. We'd just do lots of things together. He'd help me with maths and science projects as well and then just general, like outside of school help as well.'

But this seems to have been in a relaxed way; Mia talks about recent reflections on the way learning was approached in her family.

'..... we were encouraged but not pushed and I've been considering whether I wish I was pushed a bit more (laughs)'

Mia's attachment to her father is obvious, as is her regretful suggestion that had she been pushed more, she might have achieved more. Her wish to live up to the standards he sets may be replayed in her willingness to take on the extra responsibilities requested by her (male) manager.

'My manager encouraged me to do the BIA course And I've just started doing a group reflective supervision. We just had our second one yesterday. It was something my manager encouraged me to do and I think that would be very helpful actually.'

It may be that Mia is replaying her response to paternal encouragement by actively engaging in all the learning suggested by her manager and this encouragement evidently helps her to take up responsibility for her learning but it was Mia's mother who encouraged her to learn to play the piano and Mia's musical achievement is an indication that she has the grit and determination necessary to learn to play music. Mia has doubts about the way she learned to play, having not taken the more theoretical approach preferred by her mother. But her success is an indication that when interested and enjoying her subject, Mia can apply herself over a sustained period of time.

Tina also seems regretful that she wasn't pushed or encouraged more by her family. Here she reflects upon why CPD is so important to her and considers whether this is because it wasn't so highly valued in her family.

'I wonder why I am so driven to try and continue to learn; why I don't feel so confident. And I wonder whether that is because you know, I don't come from a background or a family where people were encouraged to learn or even advance on very much'

If Tina's family created an internal message that she should accept what is immediately available to her and not push herself further, she has managed to rescript this with the help of her husband who encourages her in ways that her family did not.

'He's very supportive of any study that I want to do or any time that I... I'm always reading and he's very supportive of that He would think 'oh you can do anything' he wouldn't put restrictions on himself or me.'

Perhaps having established a fulfilling personal life, Tina now feels able to focus on herself through her professional life and become the intellectually astute person she wanted to be.

'perhaps I describe myself as you know, not being open to any argument before and I like to think I was but the fact that I'm you know, open to considering things from all of the points of view and things that I thought that I'd definitely em, believed before. Now I'm more open.'

Tina's commitment to CPD seems to be fuelled by a desire to move away from her intellectually unfulfilled childhood by rescripting her approach to learning and development.

Ownership of CPD

Jackie learned early in life that she needed to be self-sustaining.

'I think you have to take charge of your own development. I don't think you can necessarily come into your role and expect your manager to say 'this is how we can develop you'. I think you need to come in knowing where you want to go. I always say this to students; you have to be intentional about what you want to do. Otherwise, you'll sit for years in a role. You'll do a good job, but you'll be there for 10 years before you even know what happened at that time. Em, so you come in thinking about 'where do I go next?', before you've even started the job so that you have a plan.'

Jackie's approach has created a momentum that has taken her from her initial Access course through to study for a doctorate.

'The doctorate was extremely challenging, and I had no idea whether I could do it. No idea. I'm not gonna lie. No idea. It's like I had no idea whether I could do the degree. And so, to come out with a 1st class degree, I was like 'there must be something there 'and so, each thing I did just gave me the gumption to do more. Almost the audacity to say 'ok, I'm gonna try that then I'm gonna try this' so, I did that. That seemed to work out already so I'm gonna try this. So that's been my experience; just that developing as a person and as a practitioner, it's really fed into my whole life, my whole journey.'

Opportunities were not given to Jackie or her family so as part of the Caribbean community in East London, they had to create them for themselves. This message was clearly stated to Jackie by her parents and her community. Here she speaks of passing on this message to her sons.

'I told my son we do 10% learning in the class and 90% is what we do on our own We run that. So, then it's not the teacher or the course The structured stuff is there to give you a guide, so ok these are the lines that you should work along professionally, legislatively, if that's a word and the rest you do yourself, the rest you should go out and get yourself. You should always be adding to that, you should be doing the 90% absolutely.'

Whereas racism seems to have dominated Jackie's early experience of learning and thus her determination to take ownership of her development now, class or habitus may have been a constraining factor for Tina. When Tina found little opportunity for social work reflection in her NHS team, her disappointment in the lack of team learning culture is resonant of her disappointment in the lack of learning culture in her family. Her response is to replay her previous patterns; she finds her own opportunities and commits her own resources to professional development. In this case, Tina joined an independent supervision group where the reflective approach she had encountered whilst qualifying, was on offer.

'..... I think I take a lot of responsibility for my own CPD. Em, coming here today, I was looking at the notice boards, there was things I thought 'Right, I'll write that down on my way out'. That I'll I'll read up on that or perhaps come to that event so you know, always on the lookout for things.'

Sarah also works in an NHS team. Just as she enjoyed the independence she was allowed as a child, so she enjoys the enjoys autonomy of being the sole social worker in the team.

'..... we've got a lot of autonomy at work Our clinical supervision is all done in groups, you don't have any one to one. And beyond that, there's very little you know There's few opportunities to make time to think about something in depth and I guess I see myself as someone who will facilitate that a bit. You know, if someone's got a query or they're feeling stuck a bit. I'll happily be that person who will try to make sense of it with them and talk it through with them And it's more about me doing that personally and taking ownership of that rather than expecting there to be a good opportunity to do that because I think they're quite few and far between..'

Again, as when she was a child, Sarah is taking responsibility for others by being the person who will facilitate reflective discussion. And just like at school, where once the mandatory work of GCSEs was over, she was able to choose more appealing subjects in the sixth form, Sarah sees a difference between mandatory training and the more interesting training she has chosen.

'Em, I think this mandatory training, often even if it is interesting, that's at the back of your mind; 'I'm here because someone said I've got to be here and they could check up on me and you know, it's just the rules'. So you instantly I guess feel a little bit switched off just because

you haven't made that choice So, I think the things I value the most are also the things I have chosen to do.'

Sarah seems to be replaying her childhood and teenage experience of learning; she is happy to be in control of her own and to lead others in their learning. Being trusted to do this is important to Sarah if she is to have ownership of her CPD.

Jules sees very clear connection between ownership of social work as a profession and ownership of the need for CPD.

'I see er, I see a duty really on myself as a social worker within that [working well and with purpose] to, continually develop my practice, my knowledge, my skills and I see continued professional development as part of that I'd say. Em, I'm very motivated to do my own development em, so I you know I will er, I'll access twitter and Facebook groups and er, em, I get a lot from reading blogs and particularly em, particularly hearing from people who've experienced the services either as service users or carers or em, people who can be quite honest about their experiences in social work and, so I'd say I access those quite a lot really, those sort of blogs.'

Commitment to/enjoyment of learning

All the participants talk about enjoying their learning. Here Mia talks about its importance for motivation but it's interesting to see how this is framed in terms of goals; somewhere clear to get to. This is resonant of her description of her father's clearly defined interests and achievements as well as her own focus upon tangible knowledge such as The Mental Capacity Act.

'I enjoy it. I always feel like there's loads more I can learn from other people Yes, it's kind of motivating to think about how you can push yourself some more (laughs). Interesting. Yeah, just how you can, it's good to have goals and I like to think I can still improve and em, it's ... yes ... I just know that I can always learn more and always quite comfortable when people tell me stuff that I don't know.'

For Jackie, continuous development is a means of managing rigour and stress. She positions herself as constantly learning.

'But I also feel continuously developing, training continuously; not just that one day training but really investing in improving your skills, sharpening your skills, becoming a better practitioner. Those things help you manage the rigours and the stresses of the work The one thing I do believe is that you have to be this continual student.'

Despite his painful school experiences, John has been able to rescript his experience of learning and feels excitement at the prospect of development.

'So you know, when I'm in a learning environment, say I'm in a structured session, I'll be asking questions, I'll be a fully interaction member cos you know, I would say stuff, I'm keen to say stuff. I'm excited about stuff. At the end of the day, I'm interested in what people might think.'

He is dismissive of the regulatory requirement for CPD which like Jules, he sees as having diminished the perception of CPD to an exercise of accountability. If an event looks meaningful to John, he is willing to give it his own time and energy.

'I think I'm always learning. I don't think there's ever a moment when I'm not. My attitude is that everything I ever do has all been learnt. So, I don't need to go somewhere to learn something. It's a bit of a bonus (laughs) it's a bit of a ... I've deliberately chosen this activity to go to. Right? I've got an activity coming up in March and when I go there, I'm all over it. You know, I can't wait if we don't go into it with the right mindset, then we don't learn.'

Jules also offers total commitment when she's engaged in her CPD but suggests here that such commitment is not restricted to her CPD

'I think I'm just not a bare minimum sort of person as well. I don't, I don't do anything by halves really I, I, it can be a good thing and a less good thing sometimes, depending on who you talk to yeah, I think if you talk to my partner, it would be like 'can you just, chill out'. Yeah, I think I don't like the sort of bare minimum and I just I feel I sometimes get frustrated with the other people on the courses if they've not been listening or if they say something that I find difficult or. Yeah. Yeah. It's important for me that people are passionate about social work

For Stephen, it's a natural extension of what is a constant state of mind; being open to learning.

'I think if you've got this kind of generally open attitude towards the work, there's not such a big role change there because you, that's kind of an extension of your openness to always be asking questions and to be trying to find the right information for what you need to do and, and it's an extension of the acknowledgement that most of the time, I don't have all the answers and my skill as a social worker is not about having the answers, it's about being able to find the answers.'

Sarah's interest in learning and development spreads beyond work.

'... ultimately, I think I'm someone who's just interested in the learning and the value of learning and I think I'd go along and study things even if they had no impact on my day to day just because I like them.'

Q3 How does it feel to learn?

The feelings of learning seem to be similarly tied up with early learning experiences. Although not specifically asked, most of the participants talked about their early family life and all of them talked about school. The data suggests a strong connection between the way we feel when learning now and the way we felt when learning as children.

How It Feels to Learn

John uses the words 'inquisitive and nosey' to describe himself when talking about the experience of learning. This may be an unconscious link to how his behaviours were seen as a child and a suggestion of his ongoing determination to reframe and rescript that view to a positive one now he is an adult.

'sometimes when you're in a scenario, it can be really uncomfortable but when you reflect on a scenario, after you've been in it, then it can be interesting. And I like to be interested because I'm inquisitive and nosey and all those good things.'

John wants to learn and develop but if openness to learning requires a level of trust and vulnerability, this is a dangerous state for John as feelings of vulnerability can reawaken the emotions caused by the fear and violence of his school experience.

'learning in that [school] kind of way, not for me. Learning in a way I can enquire, be inquisitive, have interaction, be grown up, you know (laughs) You know cos I've lived through experiences. I've lived through many experiences and not about ... you know, if I just accepted things. You know, I've accepted loads. I expected a beating outside games lessons and that's exactly what I got you know I want to feel valued. You know, I want to come out feeling like I'm valuable as an asset to the organisation. I wanna feel like I belong. I wanna feel like I'm part of something that kind of carries the same drive and determination that I do. Right? So why do I feel like I might get the sack every 5 minutes?.....

So, my emotions about CPD's learning in general terms is I get excited by it. I get frustrated by it as well. I get interested in it. I get doubtful about it. There's always these two sides for me. But that's just me. I have this double two-sided thing going on (laughs). I can't have one without the other and they are usually, relatively extreme. (laughs) you know, to find that comfortable, nice in-between is not very good for me. You know, I don't find it readily.'

John relates his experience of extreme opposites to his bi-polar condition so although he sees learning as a fundamentally good thing and wants to trust in the process, it makes him feel vulnerable.

Stephen sees new understanding as a possible solution; an exciting new idea that might make a difference to the way he can practice. The connection to his school experience where a Dyslexia assessment and learning needs plan were so helpful is apparent. Stephen has faith that good training offers solutions that will impact practice. He describes the process this takes him through.

'it's how you might experience being given a gift. Because you feel like you're being given something that really makes a difference to you I think there's kind of a feeling of relief because you're like, this kind of feeling of difficulty that you're experiencing in the practice, you kind of feel that there's some kind of resolution to that or something I think that's followed up by this kind of feeling of enthusiasm cos you think well this is gonna make a difference for me and you then start to engage with thoughts of 'ok, how can I connect it, how does this connect to this case, how do I em, ..share this with other people?' I think that kind of yeah, kind of follows up with this kind of feeling that er of excitement.'

Stephen is currently working for an agency, taking temporary contracts and this may explain his observation about people becoming stuck in their own organisation's culture and methods.

'..... especially when there's people who have been in that organisation quite a long time, there can be an assumption that this is the way social work is done everywhere and you kind of like, 'no there's very large cultural changes between local authorities, it really is' I think people can quite often feel stuck where they are and I think just having that conversation gives them that feeling of 'Oh, we're not stuck. There are alternatives out there'. I think that conversation's useful and I think maybe that's how I use the CPD that I do with myself that's how I use them.'

The conversation presented here may be either an imagined illustration or based upon an actual conversation between Stephen and a colleague in which he is trying to present a broader outlook gleaned from having worked in a different authority. This seems to be an extension of Stephen's idea of learning as a gift, to be shared, that will bring better understanding and relief to social workers who are stuck. Again, for Stephen, the right kind of learning can offer solutions and he is keen to share.

Impact of the teacher

I didn't specifically ask any of the interviewees about the impact of the teacher/trainer. Most mentioned them but none to the extent that Stephen did. He said after the interview that he is interested in developing his career into teaching so this may be why the trainer was particularly on his mind but it might also relate to his receiving his diagnosis and support plan for dyslexia at school. The response of his teachers at that time would have had significant impact on his classroom experience and it may be these dynamics replayed in the experiences described here.

Training is not always a safe experience for Stephen. He is keenly aware of whether the trainer sees him as a valuable practitioner or whether the trainer is presenting as the expert assuming the learners have nothing to give. Stephen describes coming into a learning situation feeling enthusiastic but being put onto the 'back foot' as he realises he and his colleagues aren't so valued and interaction must happen on the trainer's terms.

'sometimes training feels safe and sometimes it doesn't and the reason it feels safe is because when you come into it, you feel like the trainer is valuing you as a practitioner rather than em, devaluing someone who doesn't know what they know.'

Stephen sees knowledge as power. The story he tells below is of his perception of an abuse of power.

'ok so, in a recent training, someone said 'who knows a particular type of piece of policy relating to safeguarding and The Care Act?' and everybody was thinking about The Care Act and they weren't getting it right I'm giving the example to illustrate the idea that trainers can use terminology or theory and ask questions that people really wouldn't know, em, as a way of putting a position of them holding the knowledge and holding the power You've kind of been put in this situation where you're asked quite an open question and you've given your best guess and then you've been told that's not right because of some kind of terms they haven't told you.'

Although Stephen is describing other learners being caught out by the trainer's presentation, this account seems to relate to his own experience of being made to feel inadequate by a teacher or trainer.

'if they set up a particular power dynamic or they're the person with all the knowledge, then, er that changes things quite quickly because I think you then feel like you are ... having your own worth diminished and that point I think you're trying to protect yourself and you feel less open to what they're saying and you're more, you're I guess what I'm doing there is I'm going from a kind of quite open um, er approach to a more sceptical approach. I'm still interested in what they're trying to say but I'm kind of engaging with it quite a questioning sort of ... em way of thinking that kind of is looking for er, looking to kind of sift through what they're saying to kind of remove the stuff that I feel is em, er..... which potentially had the impact of me feeling devalued professionally.'

It is clearer here that Stephen is talking about himself. His confidence in the classroom was hard won and shouldn't be dented by clumsy approaches from trainers so he guards himself against potentially bruising comments. For a trainer to ask a question and wait for the correct answer might seem to some to be a valid teaching technique but for Stephen, it calls upon uncomfortable emotions that move him from an open to a sceptical position. Stephen's response may be connected to his own experience of feeling uncomfortable in class but a trainer could not possibly be aware of this or other emotional dynamics at play. Yet trainers must surely tread carefully if to avoid reawakening such painful feelings.

John also sees hierarchy in the classroom; the idea that senior people have information or thinking to impose on staff. Here he is saying we are moving away from that model but it is still the dominant approach.

'How do you get involved in CPD? going to a session where you meet with somebody who not only teaches you something but does it in such a way, it's almost like art, you know what I mean? So, you cannot help yourself, right? cos it's so engaging, right? You're fully drawn in, right? Cos if you're fully drawn in, then everybody understands the message don't they? You know, I don't see that very often, I see delivery, right? And it's top-down and it's driven out, right? So, it's come down and it's hierarchy and it's driven outwards and then it's

imposed upon people. I don't like that. I think what's happens. I think we're better than we've ever been at trying not to do it but that's what we still do.'

Mia also picks up on the need for trainers to be engaging.

'The trainers make a huge difference; if someone's really engaging and passionate about it and knows what they're talking about, it makes a huge difference and I'm very interested to hear what other people have said so if I've gone with some of my colleagues, they might take something very different out of it.'

This is important; if different delegates take different messages from the same training, the trainer can only be supplying one part of the learning and the delegate must supply the rest. A constructivist epistemology will explain that a delegate's previous knowledge and experience will form a fertile base for new knowledge and the social work CPD literature will comment on the practical considerations and responsibilities that delegate may face but this study would suggest the emotional state of the delegates will have just as powerful an impact on their experience.

Sarah is less struck by the style of the teacher but is clear about how to use them as facilitators and for help when needed. Ultimately, she sees the responsibility for learning as sitting with her.

'I see it as just sort of quite facilitative I suppose in sign-posting to areas to consider and resources. I suppose there's an awareness that they're a bit of an expert in their field and maybe will advise different authors to look at, research to look at but I do see it as my responsibility to then engage with that and meet them halfway. They're not gonna stand in front of me and tell me everything I need to know and it's just gonna sink in and I'll be done.'

So tutors are a resource to be tapped when needed. Further interpretation can be offered along the lines of Sarah's ability to seek what she needs from tutors and her confidence that this will be freely and effectively given and the resonance this has with Sarah's experience of attachment as a child where although clearly encouraged to assume responsibility, for example in looking after her younger cousins, she was able to develop safe in the knowledge that her parents were there when she needed them.

Jules talks here about the responsibility of the trainer to know their subject and present in a positive and engaging way.

'I went to this social work conference thing and one of the guys did a talk about the challenges facing AMHPs but he was so negative And I felt for him because I think, I think he kind of knew it wasn't the best But I was also frustrated because I think, yeah, here's my prejudice coming out. He's a young white guy who it seems has developed a company because he can make money doing it I don't know. I feel like that sounds terrible

and I don't mean it to because at least he's doing something right? At least he's engaging with people, but I actually think he put people off the idea of becoming AMHPS.'

But Jules isn't only talking about the quality of the trainer; her irritation seems to extend to the context; that the conference was run by a profit-making organisation. If Jules thinks this is not an appropriate context for social work, this may impact negatively on how she was able to hear the message of the speaker. This view may have been influenced by the voice of her father whose politics might not be accepting of private companies in public services but the fact he was a white male raised other issues of power and privilege that also made it harder for Jules to want to listen.

Context of the trainer is also an issue for Stephen, who finds it helpful for trainers to be linked to the organisation in which they are training.

'there's quite a lot of councils who seem to use external trainers, em, so people who come from particular organisations or freelance trainers or that sort of thing who come in and bring a training package with them. The difficulty with that is it's not connected to the reality of practice and sometimes even the policies and that sort of thing that you're trying to work to.'

Stephen is wary of trainers who don't seem connected to practice reality.

'I think it's really helpful when trainers acknowledge the reality of practice. I think some trainers just say you know, 'I'm giving you some principles here and these are the principles, you've got to stick to these.' And it doesn't acknowledge the realities at all and you come away thinking basically what this trainer has done is told me I'm not very good at my job because I don't meet up to whatever set of principles they put forward and I can't. I don't have the time or the resources.'

It is notable that he describes his response to disconnected trainers as a dent to his own confidence rather than to the trainer's credibility. Here, he offers a solution.

'I think the best training sessions I've been on have been where the trainers have been or are already part of the organisation; they're senior people or they're.....Principal Social Workers or social work practitioners something like that. They know what it's like working in that particular organisation, And at that point, you really feel ok, wow, this made sense.'

Stephen is sceptical of snake oil solutions offered by outsiders. Just as it was his neurodivergent mother who truly understood his challenge in learning through the lens of dyslexia, so his Principal Social Worker, with insider understanding of his organisation, recognises the challenges faced in putting principles into real life practice.

Aysun values the training sessions offered by her employer and notes the quality of the trainers. As someone who particularly enjoyed university, the format of formally taught sessions may offer a helpful familiarity. Training creates precious and important opportunities to connect with other social workers. For Aysun, being encouraged to offer

training is also important and valuable. This suggests that what she has to offer may not be perfect but is good enough and seems to connect to Stephen's point about having her experience and priorities acknowledged.

'we are encouraged to take a part in training and I find those days really informative and also it gives you time to connect with other social workers which is something you can't really do during your working hours'

Perhaps because he takes sessions with ASYE candidates where he presents his own experience as someone using mental health services, John recognises the skill involved in good teaching. Here he talks about teachers who teach in an engaging way and make everyone feel directly included. It reads as a plea to the teachers who failed to do this for him while he was at school. But John also notes it's a two-way street; like the social worker and the lightbulb, the candidates must want to engage.

'There's a craft, you know and a mastery to making it interesting you can have fun and learn at the same time It can have energy and dynamism and all those things. Make it memorable. I like to think any session I do with ASYEs is memorable. I don't want them to forget it If you want to have something so important to have some energy to it, you've got to deliver it with energy. You've got to make it interesting The stuff you're talking about is uncomfortable so yeah, you've got to energise people, you know? But people have to want to be energised. But it's a two-way street. But the person driving it is quite important.'

Mia suggests response is driven not just by what the trainer does, but who they are and how they present.

'On the way, I was talking to two colleagues and one of them was saying he really likes the trainer and the other one said she finds him a bit arrogant I'd always found him a little hard to learn from I guess. I just found him a little dry. I'm not sure, I wasn't quite sure what he was meaning with his tone of voice. I don't know, I just found him perhaps not my type of trainer to learn from.'

One can only speculate on the dynamics at play here; what it was about the trainer or the unconscious emotions in the room that suggested arrogance to Mia. But significantly, this made it hard for her to learn from him and highlights those dynamics that are out of the control of the trainer and rooted in the unconscious of the student.

How to learn?

For John, learning he has chosen himself is more likely to sink in than learning that has been imposed.

'..... so you sit there playing with your phone, doing your emails and what-have-you while someone's trying to engage you in something and losing. So, if you don't go fully intending to participate, why do you go? Right? So you can teach someone anything that you like but they've not heard it. It's not been taken inside. You know, it's laid on the outside, it's been chucked at you, you know, I guess like a coat made out of post-it notes really.'

Jules describes a conflict between her own need to actively engage in the class discussion and her belief that she shouldn't overstep her share of the time at the cost of other less-heard groups. She developed a technique of researching on-line whilst in class so her own streams of consciousness don't interrupt others but she's still aware that her question might come at the wrong time and so even with her iPad technique, Jules seems to feel that her learning imposes on others. The way she describes herself almost as a nuisance in class seems to echo her feelings as the too-loud child in school when she would speak loudly because of her hearing impediment.

'I'm the person who when the trainer says 'there's gonna be a lunch break' I'm the one with just one more question and everyone's like 'Ggggrrrrghgh! we wanna go for lunch.' Do I have to be mindful and not take up the space? I am getting better at it; making sure there's room for the people who won't normally take up space; people of colour, other women. Em, yeah Yeah I find social work so weird because, it's often more women than men but even when there's a, even when there's such a minority of men but I often see men talking first'

Jules suggests that some groups are given more airtime than others in class and sees it as her own responsibility to ensure that doesn't overstep her share of the time at the cost of others from less-heard groups. We can speculate on how much this need for justice may relate to her experience of growing up as the only girl in a family of boys; it is possible that she would at times have struggled to have her voice heard. Whilst her recognition of the need to ensure airtime for minoritized voices is a commonly accepted position, there may be a connection here to young Jules' need for fairness.

Stephen finds it easier to consolidate his learning in solitude. He discovered when at college that he could focus in on tasks in a way that was difficult to others but this is now an essential part of his learning; his technique is to engage his curiosity and then use his own time to continue to learn. This way, he can cope and keep up.

'it gives you the ability to in your own time erm, kind of teach yourself things cos when you're inhabiting, when you're in a learning environment, it's not working for you as a dyslexic you've got to find other ways of learning those things and quite often, that's by yourself, so if you have got that inquisitiveness and can in your own time, be still trying to learn things, that's really helpful and it's possibly em possibly one of the kind of coping mechanisms that I've learned as a someone who's dyslexic, is to use that er as a way of keeping up with learning.'

Tina sees learning opportunities in many different forms; exhibitions, conferences, articles, magazines.

'I think when I think of CPD..... 'it isn't just oh I'm going on a training course, I can tick that off'. Em ... it might be attending an exhibition, a conference I often don't think just reading articles em, is but em, thinking about it ... I think that probably should ... if you're a

keen reader, read PSW. I'm a social worker with autism, adults with autism so reading something like the Autistic Society magazine, that's all contributing to professional development.'

But despite her significant academic achievements, she doesn't see learning as easy, mentioning that to learn them, she had to write down the principles of The Care Act. Whether or not others also have to write things down in order to learn seems to be less important than Tina's belief that this is easy for others and she is at a disadvantage. Having come from a background where academic and professional achievement is seen to be the lot of others, Tina cannot recognise herself as a high achiever.

'I sometimes do think that I've struggled to learn things that others seem to find so easy. I do have to take notes about things all the time em, I can't learn without doing that That was my way of learning. Whereas I do work with people who seem to be able to remember things or remember things when they've been on a course without seemingly any effort. I'm a bit envious of that actually. Some people do seem to be able to learn so easily. Em ... perhaps that's just my perception. Perhaps we all have our different ways of learning or appearing to learn.'

Learning from Others

Aysun values her peer learning group which offers a chance to discuss articles within the context of the organisation.

'I'm in a group they call the 'learning champions', so we get together sometimes, and you know, read though articles and talk about stuff which I find really useful. It can be and it is quite therapeutic because especially, you're working in the same organisation and you complain about you know, you know what you talk about em, and then, just recently, er....one of my colleagues started a peer group er... so I'm hoping that will be beneficial for us. Er...we had that in the hospital team I was in and I found it very, very helpful.'

Once again, it is the sense of connection here that is important for Aysun. The opportunity to 'complain' with colleagues who will understand seems to be as important as the shared learning.

Jackie identifies pivotal points in her life where learning from others has stirred significant understanding and shifts in her perspective. She actively seeks learning and has positioned herself so to learn from others. This may be sitting next to social workers at lunchtime to learn from their conversations or studying for a doctorate alongside senior managers so coming to understand the context within which they work.

'I took time to sit with the other social workers at lunchtime and to hear about how they were progressing professionally how they managed the difficult cases, how they managed without the necessary supervision. You know, how they used peer supervision, how they co-mentored each other. And I, it was again, that very early time where I sat and I listened to child protection social workers that I think help me steer me in the right direction,

helped me to understand that ok, I'm going to need to have supports for myself in the right place. I cannot just rely on my managers because my managers have pressures of their own.'

This wasn't a new message for Jackie; she'd already been hearing this from her own parents throughout her life. It may be that others with different internal messages would have taken different learning from the social workers' lunchtime gatherings but it's clear that for Jackie, this experience confirmed the understanding that was already imprinted by the voice of her parents.

'It wasn't that I was this super focused person because seriously, I wasn't. it's because I had people whom were willing to come alongside me and share not just their successes but their failures, what went wrong and how they overcame that em, and that's what builds strength and we need that in our profession

I found that the people I was being taught by as well, were again, committed to what they were doing. I don't know if I've had a lovely experience, if I've got, you know, rose tinted glasses. But that's what I've found, I've found that help was there if you looked for it.'

It may be that Jackie has just been lucky in meeting such helpful people. It may be that her interpretation of the way people respond to her is an extended reaction formation in which she re-casts peoples' responses to her to compensate for the racist neglect she experienced at school. Or it may be, as my own experience of Jackie suggests, an even more interesting dynamic is at play. My response to Jackie has always been to want to help her and as an experienced lecturer while Jackie is new to teaching, there have been many opportunities for me to do this which I have willingly seized. It may be that I am experiencing a powerful counter transference in which I too respond to Jackie's inner voice telling her she must find what she needs. Help is there if you look for it and just as Jackie's parents promised her, I am happy to be available to give it.

In this story, Jackie shows how the faith and values instilled in her enable her to see learning opportunities in unexpected places. This helps to illustrate Jackie's experience that people are so willing to support her; this is what she sees.

'... there was this older gentleman, Caucasian gentleman called Charlie who used to sit at the bottom of our road and he was errr a single amputee so he had lost one of his legs, and he used to sit and, this was back in the day when you could, so, it was east London, he would sit at the door with his door open and you could do this, it was safe, it was like late 80s, it was ok to do this then and again, I would see him just sitting there and he looked so lonely and my heart, my little heart strings, I'm like, how can I help him and not knowing he had so much more to teach me, I remember going to see him and sitting with him... he must have been in his 80s and he told me about 2nd world war and his time in Italy and just how much I learned from him ... I learned that you can learn from these people. They have more to teach you than you can ever give them you might go in with the attitude that you're there to help but you end up finding that you're being helped yourself. And that's what I find with CPD that you should stay a virtual student because it keeps you humble ...'

All learning is good learning for Jackie and everything is learning. This is the message that was installed in her as a child and is the legacy she intends to leave for her own children.

Mia learns from her manager's approach to practice. He is available to talk through the work but also goes with her when needed so modelling practice and allowing her to observe specific approaches and ways of phrasing.

'I think the other person actually who I've learned from is my manager now, who's very strengths based and not risk averse, very supportive and very, if you need to talk to him but lets you go out and do it yourself and just seeing the way he's interacted with people as well. So, if we go out, if there's meetings and we go out and see someone that I'm working with together. Em, then it's also really useful cos you get to see someone else's way of doing it, not necessarily to start doing it myself if it's not me em, sometimes, it is good to see it and to say 'well I like that sentence' or 'I like the way they did this' and take it on.'

Mia values the opportunity to hear others' experiences in peer group discussions but prefers to bring them back in her mind to a firm understanding of how this is going to affect her practice.

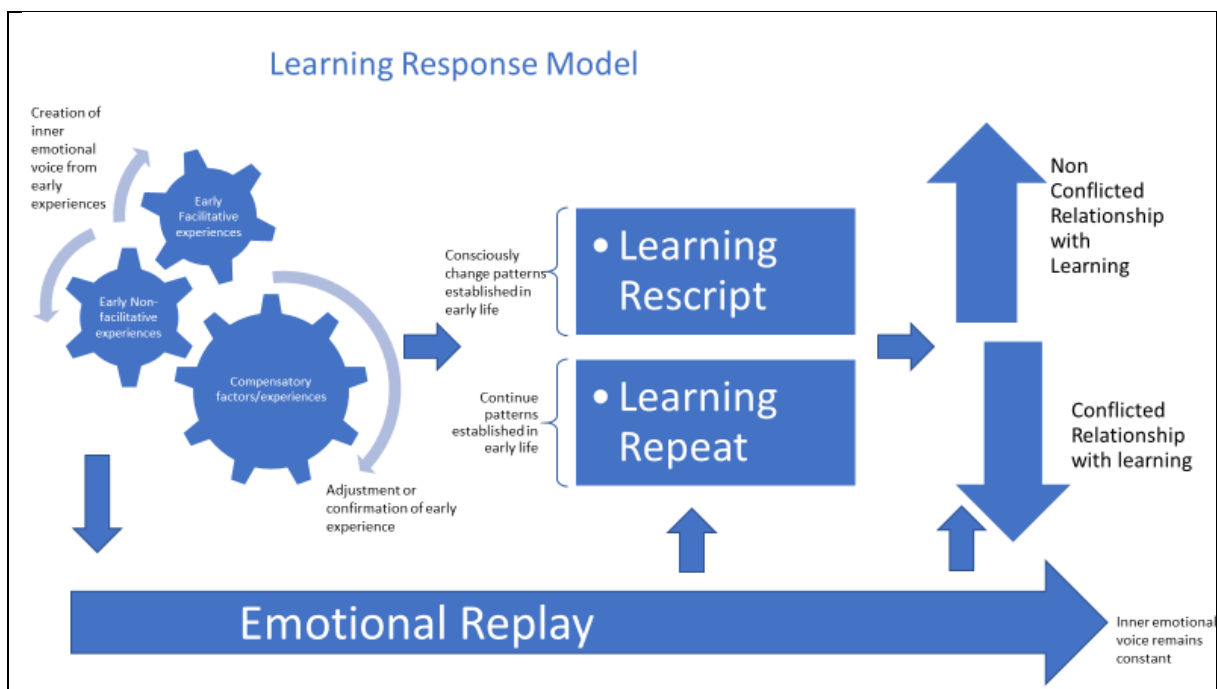
'I found it really interesting to hear about people's different approaches and to think about what people maybe didn't do that I would do or did do that I wouldn't do or you know, that you just don't think of..... It's at the back of my head that while I'm there, I think I think 'how does this relate to my cases?'

If this is further indication of the positivistic influence of her father, it may also be a note about Mia's reaction to more abstract conceptual learning; Mia seems to respond better to explicitly applicable information.

Chapter five; The Learning Response Model

Social workers' experience of CPD is largely shaped by their early experiences of learning. Early experiences are taken to mean a variety of factors including family influence and attitude to learning as well as wider social, psychological and cultural experiences. I describe this as emotional experience and there is suggestion here of an internal relational experience and an object relational frame. But the extent to which early emotional experiences of learning are repeated when social workers learn as adults was not anticipated. The suggested process behind this is shown in the following model.

The Learning Response Model



The Learning Response model is a biographical narrative model of the pedagogy of CPD. It shows how early life experiences create what can be experienced as predominantly facilitating or predominantly non-facilitating environments in which to learn. From this study, it seems the patterns of learning laid down in those early years can stay with us into adulthood. So if we had early experiences that were predominantly facilitative of learning in which we were largely encouraged to explore and learn and take risks with our learning, this would be likely to continue into adulthood where we can Repeat those unconflicted approaches to learning that worked so well for us as children. If, however, our early experiences were non-facilitative and we were predominantly discouraged or marginalised for our attempts to learn, or if our attempts at learning did not bring perceived success, the

alienation from learning this might cause is also likely to remain with us into adulthood. We might continue to Repeat the conflicted experience of learning as determined by our original blueprint. But the model also reflects the presence of a Compensatory factor or experience that seems to have been encountered by each of this study's participants. In the case of those with non-facilitating early experiences, these Compensatory factors or experiences can mitigate any non-facilitative experiences and can help us, where needed, to alter or Rescript our approach to learning as adults.

Strikingly, the model shows that whether our early experiences were facilitating or non-facilitating, the story or message about us that they created to us, continues to be emotionally Replayed as an inner voice. The model shows the experience of the participants which is that we can Rescript our relationship with learning but we cannot Rescript the inner emotional voice. This continues to Replay its internal message of who we are in relation to our potential to develop.

The Learning Response model grew from the realisation whilst immersed in the stories from the data that however much the participants had managed to achieve in terms of their education or their careers, where they had had difficult or non-facilitating early experiences of learning, those emotions stayed with them into adult life. But this is not restricted to participants with non-facilitating early experiences; the data suggests that those who were lucky to experience facilitating environments have also Replayed those emotions into adulthood and into their current relationships with learning.

The Learning Response model shows that among these participants

1. Early biographical experiences such as formal education, family culture and societal influences to include discrimination and class, form an environment that is either predominantly facilitating or predominantly non-facilitating of an ability to engage positively with learning.
2. All described some kind of Compensatory factor or experience that helped to either adjust non facilitating early experiences or confirm facilitating experiences.
3. Participants from early predominantly facilitating environments went on to Repeat these experiences in a constructive and productive mode leading to a largely non-conflicted position in relation to learning
4. Participants from early predominantly non-facilitating environments went on to Rescript their relationship with learning. They have consciously shifted the patterns that were laid down in early life and are now able to approach learning in a largely non-conflicted way.
5. Whether original learning patterns are Repeated or Rescripted, the original emotional experience continues to be Replayed throughout adult learning

Experiences that feed psycho-social psychology are complex and cannot be constrained to a linear model of prediction. But it is these that form the influential inner voice that has powerful impact on participants' emotional approaches to learning. The participants' narratives suggest that whilst some might consciously or unconsciously Repeat learning

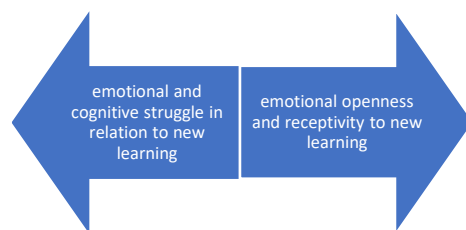
patterns of the past and some might Rescript them, they all seem to Replay the emotion that accompanied their formation. So despite Jackie's negative societal influence through her experiences of racism in the 1980s, her powerfully compensatory experience from her family culture means she doesn't appear to be much affected. She is in Learning Repeat; the model introduced to her as a child still works. She takes what she can from formal learning but continues to create her own opportunities. The determined optimism and belief in herself that surrounded her as a child is continuously emotionally Replayed. Whereas John's formal education was negative to the extent that he appears to still be struggling to find a more relaxed, productive management of engagement. He is in Learning Rescript as he tries to rework the patterns that were established when he was small and vulnerable but still he emotionally Replays the feelings and the fear as the emotion floods back into him at the thought of being exposed once again in the gaze of learning. Tina's story is one of trying to achieve that thing she missed or was denied. Her formal education, family culture and societal influence combined all cast her as a low achiever. But Tina has worked hard to Rescript this and now has the compensatory experience of a supportive husband who encourages and takes an interest in her development. Tina's husband is highly significant and now appears as the enabling environment she lacked in childhood. Her Learning Rescript has been successful although emotionally, she still Replays the feelings of intellectual inadequacy.

The level of conflict felt in the participant's relationship with learning is presented as on a spectrum Although Aysun, John, Mia and Stephen all present some conflict in their relationship with learning, this is not a dominating factor for them and they are all able to engage, connect and actively seek further development (evidenced by their having volunteered to join in with this study). But the model cannot be fully tested by the data gathered in this research as although the participants are Replaying a variety of positive or very difficult emotions in relation to their learning, none presents as now having a predominantly conflicted relationship with learning. My study has not represented those who are less affected or even seemingly untouched by the experience. This was mentioned earlier as a limitation to this study.⁸ Further research is needed to establish a method that enables access to this part of the social work population.

Each of the participants in the study sits somewhere on the spectrum between an emotional and cognitive struggle in relation to new learning and emotional openness and receptivity to new learning.⁹

⁸ The existence of this second group is identified in the on-line questionnaire (appendix 1) where in answers to Q8, we can see three negative responses to the question 'What impact has CPD had upon you?'. A negative response from just 4% of the respondents is clearly too small to draw any firm conclusions but it does point to the existence of this unrepresented population although does not suggest how significant that population may be.

⁹ There is also evidence of this in the on-line questionnaire (appendix 1), eg R07 expressing reluctance in agreeing to any CPD as can feel overwhelming on top of existing work and R34 embracing a non-mandatory conference that took them beyond their daily role reinforcing broader social work connection



My suggestion that the cause for positioning is rooted in biography is because when invited to talk about their experiences of CPD, interview participants all went back to their childhoods and made conscious or unconscious links between their biographical experiences and their current approach to CPD. Aysun relishes any opportunity to learn but the influence of her family's high standards prevents her from finding the answers she seeks. Jackie's family's experience of racism and her parent's very positive way of rising above this have led to her determination to achieve and progress and her ability to engage others in her development. John links his mental distress to the bullying he experienced at school. Jules' teacher-father encouraged a love of self-directed learning that she maintains and now encourages in the students she teaches. Mia's father's influence is apparent in her attraction to positivistic clearly definable knowledge. Sarah's healthy attachment experience has allowed her to develop her independence and now her career, from a young age. Stephen's confidence that he can push through barriers created by dyslexia is traceable to the supportive understanding he was given as a teenager and Tina's apparent inability to recognise her own achievements is linked to her family and school's failure to spot her potential.

Inner Emotional Voice

Whilst adult experience of learning is not fully shaped by childhood, there is a continuing trace of original experiences in the data that could be understood as an inner emotional voice that continues to speak to experiences now. It is possible to Rescript childhood experiences of learning by laying down a new pattern of responses to study and development of knowledge but the inner emotional voices retain their influence and can direct the emotional response. So John and Tina cherish the opportunity to learn and as adults, have achieved career and academic success but Tina hears an inner emotional voice that limits her potential and John hears one that cries out warning and causes him to respond with the fear and apprehension of a vulnerable child. Aysun's inner emotional voice is dissatisfied, has a sense of injustice and feels let down but maintains optimism in her determination to find the something special she knows is out there. Jackie's voice is that of her parents; it refuses to allow her to internalise the discriminatory messages surrounding her at school, zones out the negativity and drives her to make the most of her opportunities. Jules' voice is her father's. Learning is fun; why wouldn't you seize every opportunity? But it also reminds her of her family's experience of mental distress and compels her to make it better for people whenever she can. Mia's inner emotional voice seeks more; a definable achievement that can be quantified and compared. Sarah's inner voice is one of self-

sufficiency and containment, shaped by a healthy experience of attachment with her parents and school and Stephen's is shaped by his mother's kind encouragement and belief in his ability.

To some extent, these inner emotional voices are with us all the time but the vulnerability of learning seems to amplify their message and express latent need; both Mia and Aysun seek the presence of an authority figure who will be pleased or respond to their achievements and John and Stephen are both seeking external recognition and validation. The voices are powerful; Stephen's can emotionally transport him to the feelings of difference and inadequacy first felt at school. Whilst Jules, who as a child, was regularly told off for being too loud, tries to temper her natural enthusiasm. But her inner emotional voice is too excited and competitive about her learning so Jules' questions spill out and her class is late for lunch.

Learning Repeat

Where childhood experiences of learning were helpful, participants have Repeated the more successful elements; Jackie's expectations of structural institutions may be limited but just as she was encouraged as a child to seek her own opportunities and willing mentors through the Caribbean church, she continues to spot opportunities for learning and sees (and finds) mentors in the people around her. Jackie is in Learning Replay; her inner voice remains constant but she still subject to a developmental trajectory and might still be modified to some degree by Compensatory experiences. Jules' repeat of the learning patterns laid down by her father are less conscious; she attributes her development to the influence of her mother but her learning and teaching behaviours are like those established by her father. Jules wants to know more; she seeks the story behind the story so will question and research. So strong is this pattern within her that she is surprised at its absence in others. Sarah's productive experience at school is Repeated in her CPD; the containment and structure of an academic framework offers her a solid basis from which to continue to develop professionally.

Learning Rescript and Compensatory Experiences

Where original learning experiences haven't worked well, participants describe their attempts to Rescript their learning. John's life at school was brutal and he now associates learning with pain. His very positive experience when he returned to studying was a surprise and seems to have formed a compensatory experience for him by reinforcing his innate desire to learn. But he is still wary and is determined to stay in control of his experience. He has also taken control of his children's learning experiences by paying for private education.

Tina has successfully Rescripted her relationship with learning and aspiration. It seems that the very positive relationship she has with her husband and his family has been a compensatory experience for her and she has now established herself as part of both a family and a profession where learning is valued and she is encouraged to progress. But she still locates herself outside of the group of educational achievers; the internal voice that was

established within her as a child whose potential was overlooked still resonates and shapes her vision.

Emotional Replay

Common to all the participants seems to be the carrying forward of the emotion associated with learning at a young age. So John's success is overshadowed by the vulnerability he felt at school while the apparently healthy attachment to her family that enabled Sarah to have such a positive school experience, enables her to feel safe and secure in her efforts now. Just as young Jules was swept up by her father's stories, shared to spark her interest and learning, so she is still unable to contain excitement at the prospect of new ideas and thinking. And for Stephen, despite his subsequent academic success, being in a classroom reminds him of the discomfort associated with feeling different and the challenge of keeping up in class before his dyslexia was understood.

	Early Environment	Inner Voice	Compensatory Experience	Learning Replay (emotion)	Learning Repeat (doing)	Learning Rescript (changing)
Aysun	Predominantly non-facilitating; school seemed irrelevant and unsatisfactory. Family set high standards that could not be met.	Aysun's voice is that of her family setting high expectations that can never be met	Aysun draws support from her peers. Knowing that she shares experiences with colleagues is an important part of coping mechanism.	The dissatisfaction Aysun experienced as a child continues to be played out in her approach to professional development; she works hard and has high expectations but these can never be met and ultimately, she is left feeling disappointed.		Aysun has taken control of her situation and her learning; she has moved to a new country, acquired British citizenship, trained as a social worker and now earns her own living and looks after her family.
Jackie	Predominantly facilitating because of the determination of Jackie's parents but also strong non-facilitating influence from racism at school.	Jackie's voice is her parents refusing to allow her to internalise negativity and insisting she take responsibility for own development	The relentless positivity and ambition of Jackie's family and their faith served as powerful compensation for her experience of being overlooked in a racist school.	Jackie Replays an optimism, a self-belief and a determination to succeed.	Jackie Repeats the pattern laid down by her family; 10% of learning is given and 90% must be found oneself.	
John	Predominantly non-facilitating. School was a violent and frightening experience.	John's voice is that of a vulnerable child who fears something bad will happen	John's helpful experience of education as an adult caused him to reframe the experience of learning. This has not removed his fear but has caused him to view it differently.	Such is the damage caused by John's original school experience that he has not been fully successful at Rescripting his approach to learning and replays the feeling of trepidation associated with learning as a child.		John has made conscious attempts at Learning Rescript by trying to take control of his learning experiences. He has paid for private school for his children in the hope this will Rescript for the next generation.
Jules	Predominantly facilitating; Jules' father and her competitiveness with her brothers made learning an integral and fun part of life.	Jules' voice is that of her father encouraging her to learn because learning is fun. Everything is an opportunity to learn.	Although forced to curb her enthusiasm at school, Jules' home experience encouraged constant development.	Jules Replays her father's love of teaching and imparting knowledge and seeks to spread her enthusiasm through to the students she teaches.	Jules Repeats her family's pattern of giving high value to learning and to knowledge. For Jules, books are to be cherished and everything is a learning opportunity.	
Mia	Pre-dominantly facilitating; Mia's family valued and encouraged	Mia's voice is uncertain and seeks an external figure to	Mia's ability as a musician gives her considerable enjoyment but is also a powerful	Mia Replays an uncertainty. She works hard and achieves well but measures herself		Mia has moved away from her family and created her own style of learning. She has learned to play the piano

	learning but Mia was unable to establish/assert her own interests and initially allowed herself to be influenced by others.	recognise her achievements.	message about how she can acquire skills and continue to develop on her own terms.	against clearly definable targets that do not necessarily apply to her own successes.		using a different approach to other family members and has forged a career and a life in a different country.
Sarah	Predominantly facilitating; Sarah was encouraged to work hard and to learn but a proportionate stance was always taken to this.	Sarah's voice is that of her parents; learning is one of many valuable parts of life. Recognises Sarah's ability but sees balanced approach to life just as important.	Her parent's helpful response to her sister's struggle with school prevented Sarah from placing unhelpful emphasis on education but their positive approach to study means it remains highly valued	Sarah Replays a feeling of self-sufficiency, security and confidence in her own ability.	Sarah's positive experience of school and her parent's encouragement of her independence established a pattern of learning that she now Repeats as she works through a post qualifying programme of study.	
Stephen	Predominantly facilitating; although early years at school were difficult, Stephen's parents and teachers were kind and supportive. Help was offered and he was able to use this.	Stephen's voice is that of his mother; learning and thinking is to be highly valued. Dyslexia causes difference but does not prevent Stephen's high achievement.	The self-belief offered by his mother's kind understanding has meant that although Stephen defines himself by his dyslexia, he is not constrained by it.	And yet the strength of Stephen's feelings when he discusses the impact of teachers suggests he can be transported back to the time in school when his needs were not understood.		Stephen has Rescripted his relationship with learning by declaring the difference created by dyslexia and locating the difficulties with the teaching and support on offer. This has been a successful approach. He now has a master's degree and can confidently approach CPD on his own terms.
Tina	Predominantly non-facilitating; neither Tina's family nor her school showed interest and value in educational aspiration.	Tina's voice is that of her family. Learning and education is valuable and aspirational but it does not recognise Tina's own success.	The experience of joining her husband's family has given Tina the opportunity to enter into the world from which she felt herself to be excluded.	There are still elements of Replay that cannot be shaken off; Tina has not fully recognised her own achievements.		Tina has consciously sought to Rescript her original experience of learning. She has invested her time and money in higher education as well as practice development.

Further Questions

None of the participating social workers seemed to be Repeating patterns that did not work for them. The fact that they volunteered to give time to this study might suggest these social workers have patterns that include an active ownership of their learning. A wider participant pool to include social workers less obviously engaged with CPD might show a different result so this and the extent to which others' experiences might be represented by this model could be tested by further research.

Also not clear from this study is the extent to which this Learning Response is fixed; how much we can shift between these states and also between the positions on the spectrum of struggle and openness to new learning.

Conclusion

This study has expanded and deepened the existing body of research. Although focussed on the experiences of a small group of social workers, it offers a distinctive new angle to existing theoretical and pedagogical armoury with wider implications for CPD and higher education. The learning response model shows how the level of facilitation offered by early learning experiences is emotionally replayed in adulthood. The data offers compelling evidence that this has a dominating impact on a learner's ability to engage and suggests that attempts on the part of the teacher/trainer to encourage engagement need to be at a relational level. The extent to which this is the case needs to be further researched and tested.

Opening up to the process of CPD seems to open up social workers to an inner voice that has been created by early learning experiences. Where this voice is positive, social workers can immerse themselves in their learning and professional development in a positive and productive way. Where the voice is discouraging, creative lesson planning is not enough to help them engage with learning and there is a need for sensitivity and awareness of a psychosocial state. The Learning Response model is a biographical narrative model of the pedagogy of CPD. It offers a framework of understanding that can help social work educators be more sensitised and alert to the emotional state of their students and enable them to operate a more discriminating approach by adapting their way of working according to the required sensitivity.

My methodology frames this study within a critical realist ontology, suggesting a certainty of existence. Certainly, the Learning response model represents something I believe can be used to improve understanding so does assume a realist position. But it took interpretive work to create it and its use relies upon a further process of interpretation. Unable at this stage to commit to a known series of options, my position of critical realist ontology and constructivist epistemology remains. The data presented is absolute truth as experienced by the participants. The interpretation and analysis is however, subjective. I am presenting the Learning Response model as certainty but its use will necessarily be constructivist as the experience and world view of its users will influence its results.

The model has implications for social work teachers, educators and practice development teams who commission training for social workers. It may also be of interest to educators and training commissioners from other disciplines. These professionals might not have the opportunity to get to know their learners in as much depth as I have in this study in which case the dynamics that impede or promote learning will be unknown to the educator. But whilst research elsewhere has explored the external drivers for social worker's ability to engage with CPD, the Learning Response model might be used to explore the unconscious factors that are harder to grasp but are as least as powerful as the predictable but pressing issues known to create barriers to learning, such as absence of caseload relief, lack of time to study and difficulties in arranging additional childcare. The Learning Response model might also offer some additional understanding to existing knowledge. For example, impact of organisational culture (Mitchell, 2001; Cooper and Rixon, 2001; Channer and Doel, 2009) is more easily recognised when seen within the context of individual emotional resonance and

the emotional conflict and fear of appearing inexperienced (Taylor, 2001) is better understood with awareness of a potentially undermining inner voice.

Adult learning experience is not fully shaped by childhood experience and compensatory experiences can prevail or mitigate early experiences. But the evidence from this small group of social workers suggests the emotional impact of early learning experiences is strong and their impact is lasting. People come into training rooms bringing a great deal that either enables or inhibits their ability to make use of what is on offer. Social work educators cannot respond to specific experiences of which they have no awareness. But use of this model might help them recognise the presence of these powerful dynamics and to respond to social work learners at this psycho-social, emotional level.

True to form, I'll finish this presentation with chocolate. I may not have been the exemplary trainer suggested by my course 'Happy sheets' but the handing out of Freddo bars on courses mentioned in the Introduction to this presentation may have inadvertently struck a latent chord. If course participants had been responding to an unconscious need for consideration, connection or containment from an authority figure, a benign response to this may have been represented by the chocolate and its offer may have enabled the participants to open themselves up more freely to learning. Awareness of hidden emotions helps to explain the differences in the way social workers might respond to CPD. For social workers to be able to fully connect and engage with their CPD, this research suggests that attendance to the emotional experience is as important as attendance to the practical.

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Appendix 1

On-line Questionnaire

Emotional Experience of CPD for Social Workers

Q 1 What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q 2 How old are You?

- ☐ 23-30 years
- ☐ 31-40 years
- ☐ 41-50 years
- ☐ 51-60 years
- ☐ 60+ years
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q 3 How would you describe your ethnicity?

Q 4 How long have you been practising as a qualified social worker?

Q5 What CPD have you undertaken over the past year?

Q6 Please tell me about any particularly memorable CPD that you have experienced at any time in your career.

Q7 What influences your capacity to engage with CPD?

Q8 What impact has CPD had upon you?

If you able to travel to The Tavistock Clinic in Belsize Park, London and would be interested in taking part in the next stage of this study which will involve up to two interviews, please leave a contact email address for me here.

[Introduction to the Questionnaire](#)

The on-line questionnaire was intended to have three key functions;

1. recruitment to the interview stage of the project

It would have been easy to recruit a group of my social work colleagues and friends but I wanted to reach out to people with whom I did not have an existing relationship so advertised for questionnaire participants on Twitter. I anticipated it would be easier to do this by inviting people to take part in a questionnaire in which the last question asks whether they might be interested in the interview stage of the research.

2. material to help form the opening question for the interview stage of the project

In the event, the questionnaire material did not help form the opening question for the interviews. I needed an open question and my challenge for this was wording the question without steering rather than seeking new ideas for the question. But analysing the results to the questionnaire did lead me to change my third research question from 'What impact do social workers think CPD has on their practice?' to 'How does it feel to learn'? This is because although the answers given to this question offered helpful insight, I realised on reviewing them that this was a question that is often asked and the next stage of my project offered the opportunity to attempt understanding of a less accessible emotional experience rather than the practical experience suggested by this question.

3. introduction and potential triangulation to the emerging themes of the study

The questionnaire created an opportunity to check on whether the themes that arose in the individual interviews might also have resonance in a different group of social workers. It wouldn't have been possible for me as a part time doctoral student to interview all 68 questionnaire participants but their questionnaire responses did give an indication of the themes that might have arisen if they were interviewed.

Limitations

The limits to the questionnaire are recognised. Importantly, I am not able to confirm that all the questionnaire participants are registered social workers. This requirement was stated as part of the recruitment process but it was not confirmed as participants' entries were accepted. It is unlikely that the interview participants would have given the depth of data offered unless genuinely social workers. But it is possible, although unlikely given the nature of the responses, that the questionnaire respondents were not all social workers.

This is a small survey and results can only offer suggestions of themes. The questionnaire design is likely to have been influenced by existing assumptions so could test existing thoughts rather than offer meaningful insight into the experiences of the people responding. I could have asked a single open question such as 'tell me about your experience of CPD' on the questionnaire to see what meaning the respondent might bring but I decided to avoid anything that might put respondents off by resembling an open essay question. To be completed, the questionnaire needed to be quickly and easily answered but this creates limits. These limitations might be shared by some narrative interview approaches but a questionnaire also detaches the answers from the context and meaning of the respondent (Mishler, cited in Hollway and Jefferson, 2008. p.7). Put simply, I do not know the person who is answering the question so cannot check meaning and find out what the respondent considers important. This can lead to misunderstanding (Hollway & Jefferson, 2008), 'context strip' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and reduction of the personality, experience and existence of the participants down to written responses to questions they might not consider to be relevant. A questionnaire alone cannot offer the rich insight into the experience of social workers I have been seeking but there was scope for this in the interviews and just as the questionnaire offers triangulation for the interviews, so the interviews suggest some unanticipated depth of understanding for the questionnaires.

Question Design

Questions 1-4 sought demographic information; gender, age, ethnicity and number of years in practice. These gave an indication of how representative was my sample of the general social work population in England.

Question 5 asked what CPD had been taken over the past year. I was interested in what social workers consider CPD to be; whether they would mention less structured opportunities such as reading/radio plays or whether CPD is seen to be restricted to courses attended. I was also interested in what CPD subjects currently chosen.

This aspect of my small study will shortly be dwarfed by the information that will be collected by SWE as it now requires each registered social worker to upload their CPD profile and evidence of learning. This will give the registering body a vast snapshot of current CPD activity across the workforce although on the basis of my own study and its suggestion of the emotional influence on social worker's capacity for CPD, I would question SWE's apparent assumption that submission of CPD records and reflective accounts is evidence of actual development.

Question 6 asked for memorable experiences of CPD. I was looking here for understanding of what makes CPD 'stick'; what is it about an experience that might resonate and remain with a candidate long after the chocolate has been eaten. Question 7 built upon this theme but offered space for an internal driver or response to external factors and for this to have an impact on development and question 8 sought understanding of impact.

Notably, despite the limitations described, the questionnaire data brought unanticipated richness and I had a powerful sense whilst analysing, of hearing the voices of the social workers who had volunteered their time and thoughts to my study.

Data Collection

Respondents were invited to complete the on-line questionnaire (Appendix 1), accessed via Smart Survey.

Analysis of the questionnaire responses took place before the interviews and it was the variety of responses that influenced the shaping of the interview question to allow for individual interpretation of appropriate response. Responses to the questionnaire also helped to clarify the three main research questions.

Questionnaire Analysis

Files were uploaded individually to MaxQDA software for preliminary thematic analysis. This is a recursive process of six stages; data familiarity and transcribing, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing then refining themes and finally, producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clark critique suggestions that new theory might 'emerge' from the data; theory doesn't just float to the surface of its own accord; the researcher plays an active role in noticing and highlighting themes. For Charmaz and Belgrave (2007), grounded theory does allow for a constructivist recognition of the researcher's position and this fits with my own approach to reflexivity.

Themes for Questions 1-4 were deductive, demographic questions that required simple coding and presentation of the data. They are presented with comparisons from The Children's Social Work Workforce (Dept for Education, 2018) and the National Minimum Dataset for Social Care (Skills for Care, 2018) for adult's social workers.

Question 5, 'What CPD have you undertaken over the past year?' was coded in two parts; 'CPD model' and 'CPD subject'. Coding here was inductive in that types of CPD arose from

the data and were not pre-defined but in hindsight, a deductive approach could have been used as the types of CPD that arose could have been anticipated and therefore pre-defined.

Questions 6, 'Please tell me about any Memorable CPD that you have experienced at any time in your career', 7 'What influences your capacity to engage with CPD' and 8 'What Impact has CPD had upon you?', did need inductive analysis as here, the respondents offered comments about their own responses to their CPD experiences. A thematic approach was taken as the data was examined for themes that were given codes into which the data was sorted. At this stage, the findings were used to help inform the shaping of the three questions for the overall study.

The questionnaire data was examined again after the interviews had taken place and the three main research questions were presented as codes into which the data was sorted for comparison/triangulation to the interview data. That the response to this was limited is not surprising; the research questions are aimed at understanding internal processes but the questionnaire, partly to encourage responses, asks for more accessible, conscious thoughts. It was tempting to apply some psychoanalytic thought even to this brief questionnaire; if respondents are defended subjects, speculation about hidden meaning behind statements offered must surely follow. But for reasons highlighted in the main body of this text, such approach to questionnaire analysis is beyond the skill of this researcher.

Questionnaire Findings

The 68 respondents are broadly representative of the social work community in England in terms of age/gender/time in practice. The average number of CPD experiences reported is five per person and training courses and conferences are the most cited form of CPD. Most of the CPD reported focusses on statutory knowledge; safeguarding adults and children and understanding of legal roles and functions. CPD presented by people with lived experiences of the issues being examined were mentioned as being of particular value as was CPD that connected social workers to academic content and to their own identity as professionals.

CPD is another demand on top of an already demanding role but for the most part, social workers see benefit in their investment and there is evidence here of a long-standing positive relationship among these respondents, with their learning. Not surprisingly, work and time pressure was mentioned by most respondents as having impact on ability to engage with CPD. But perhaps surprisingly, slightly more respondents mentioned the importance of their manager/employer in their attitude to CPD than mentioned the impact of the trainer/teacher. The percentage rises further when impact of family/partner/others is included. This may offer a helpful foreshadow to a main conclusion of this study that much of the impact of CPD is based upon dynamics outside of the classroom.

Questions 1-4

These questions offer a demographic profile of the questionnaire respondents. To understand how representative they are of the wider social worker population in England, data is compared in table (a) to both The Children's Social Work Workforce (Dept for Education, 2018) and the National Minimum Dataset for Social Care (Skills for Care, 2018)

for adult's social workers. Direct comparisons are not possible as each collects data in a different format.

Table (a)

	Children's workforce		Adult's workforce		Questionnaire	
Q1 Gender	Female	86%	Female	80%	Female	82%
	Male	14%	Male	20%	Male	18%
Q2 Age	20-29	15%	Under 25	2%	23-30	15%
	30-39	31%	25-34	21%	31-49	37%
	40-49	24%	35-44	26%	41-50	21%
	50-59	24%	45-54	31%	51-60	26%
	60+	6%	55-64	19%	60+	1%
			65+	2%		
Q3 Ethnicity	BAME	16%	BAME	23%	BAME	13%
	White	66%	White	77%	White	87%
	Unknown	18%				
Q4 Number of Years in Practice	2-5 yrs	24%	Under 3 yrs	18%	2-5 yrs	26%
	5-10 yrs	18%	3-9 yrs	42%	6-10 yrs	38%
	10-20 yrs	18%	10+	42%	11-20 yrs	22%
	20-30 yrs	6%			21-30 yrs	9%
	30yrs+	2%			31yrs+	4%

There were 68 responses to my survey. 56 women and 12 men. Age of respondents ranged from between 23-30 years and 60+ years. Without access to raw data, it is not possible to state exactly how demographically representative is my sample of the social work workforce but the published national statistics suggest broad similarity. Where my respondents are not representative is in ethnicity as only 13% of my respondents describe themselves as being from a black or ethnic minority ('BAME') background whereas 16% of children's social workers and 23% of adult's social workers are described as such. This is disappointing for my study but perhaps not surprising as Twitter, although technically inclusive, does not have an overall moderator to amplify minoritised voices so it is likely that the dominant discourse on the UK Twitter social work community is white. This brings me to the second obvious drawback to recruitment of participants through Twitter in terms of representation which is that this is an engaged part of the social work community; these are colleagues who are spending their own time interacting with social work on social media. Of the 535 social workers who might have engaged with my tweet, those who chose to respond will be likely to either have an interest in research, perhaps will have a personal connection to me or may be interested in forming a connection with The Tavistock. Glover's (2016) caution for a sampling bias is pertinent to this study; social workers engaged in the on-line social work community may be more motivated to engage with CPD than a random sample of social workers that includes those who do not engage with social work on-line. Similarly, those colleagues who responded to my email might be more likely to be those who are interested in development of social work practice.

So my respondents can be said to be representative of the social work community in England in terms of age, gender and time in practice but representation may stop there.

Q5 What CPD have you undertaken over the past year?

Q5 What CPD undertaken?	Cited by respondents	Cited by respondents %	Total number of mentions
training courses/workshops	62	33%	178
self-directed (seminars and reading)	31	16%	68
conference	26	14%	39
accredited HE	12	6%	15
peer discussions	11	6%	14
on-line learning	10	5%	14
shadowing	10	5%	10
other	9	5%	15
practice based CPD	5	3%	6
social media	5	3%	5
supervision	5	3%	5
None	2	1%	2
	188	100%	371

Individual occurrences of CPD ranged from 17 (R47) to none (R13 and R04). The mean average number of CPD experiences was 5.

Of the types of CPD mentioned, the highest number named was 'training courses and workshops'. 62 out of 68 respondents said they had attended a total of 179 training courses and workshops over the past year. This may be a matter of description; the questionnaire allowed for respondents to use their own terminology so there could be overlap between 'conferences' and 'training courses and workshops'. three of the six respondents who didn't mention training courses and workshops did say they had attended conferences, two said they had attended no training and one said their only training had been 'induction'.

'Social media' and 'supervision' had the lowest number mentions at five each. This is surprising as the opportunity to develop through supervision should be available to all social workers and recruitment for this study largely took place on Twitter so a significant number of participants are likely to be active in the Twitter social work community. It may be that whilst there is professional development taking place in these forums, it is not framed as such by social workers which raises the question of whether social workers recognise CPD that is not formally structured or presented and even whether CPD needs to be provided by employers to be acknowledged as such by social workers.

CPD Subjects

CPD subject	No of mentions	%
Safeguarding	49	24%
¹⁰ MCA/MHA/AMHP/BIA	21	10%
Practice Educator/ ¹¹ ASYE Assessor	19	9%
Other	15	7%
therapeutic working	11	5%
leadership and management	10	5%
administration/information governance	7	3%
mental health	7	3%
practice models	7	3%
assessment and analysis	5	2%
Continuing Health Care	5	2%
motivational interviewing	5	2%
Recording	5	2%
Supervision	5	2%
domestic abuse	4	2%
forensic social work	4	2%
practice skills	4	2%
presentation/training/facilitation skills	4	2%
self-care	4	2%
Autism	3	1%
child development	3	1%
legal literacy	3	1%
Dementia awareness	2	1%
emotional intelligence	2	1%
service user involvement	2	1%
human rights	1	1%
Grand Total	207	

The trend suggested here is that most CPD (35.2%) focusses on the knowledge required for statutory functions i.e. safeguarding and application of the Mental Health Act and Mental Capacity Act. Subject knowledge and leadership/practice education account for a further

¹⁰ Mental Capacity Act, Mental Health Act, Approved Mental Health Professional, Best Interests Assessor

¹¹ Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

30.4% of CPD but supervision is the subject of only 2.4% of CPD and Human Rights, or the value base of social work, is 0.5%.

Q6 Memorable CPD experienced at any time

Q6 particularly memorable CPD	Respondents %
Training courses/workshops	73%
training from people with lived experience	10%
practice experience	5%
None	4%
'other'	4%
Peer discussions	4%
Grand Total	100%

73% cited training courses as having been particularly memorable. As 91% of respondents attended a training course, this is not surprising.

10% of respondents cited learning from people with lived experience of services as particularly memorable. This study does not ask how many respondents have learned in this way; experience of learning from people with lived experience would be a helpful topic for future research.

25 respondents explained what made certain CPD experiences particularly memorable. Themes that emerged were:

Connecting with Social Work identity

Social work identity is not a clearly defined concept yet social workers here suggest it has meaning for them. Interestingly, for R34, identity was reinforced by looking outside of the profession to a wider structural context whereas for R68, it was the experience of coming back to a clearly defined social work role.

R34 'The most memorable CPD I have experienced has usually not been mandatory! Particularly, events such as the SWAN¹² conference, have been a memorable experience, as this offered the opportunity to look at our roles as Social Workers in a much wider social, economic and political context, beyond the organisations and fields that we work within on a day to day basis. This was a powerful reminder of our identity as Social Workers being much, much more, than a role we are employed to do.'

R68 'Completing the practice educator training - I felt like it really helped me re-connect with my social work identity having spent a long time working in a youth justice setting. I really

¹² Social Work Action Network

enjoyed meeting with other social workers in the training and it motivated me to become involved in the development of students as part of my own CPD'

Connection to Academic content

R38 suggests a feeling of reassurance being offered by a connection to traditional social work theory whilst R39 hints at excitement at being situated close to the development of new thought.

R38 'Attachment Theory-because it was very case based and suddenly lots of things made sense'

R39 'building resilient children was particularly memorable - although only this year it was fascinating to try and begin to understand the research behind the neuroscience relating to emotions - how they develop, what the impact of this development is upon the child as they grown. This is new research that is being undertaken and so new ideas/theories are being formed from this. The researcher themselves delivered the training.'

Impact on own understanding and practice

Interesting about both these examples is that they reflect impact on the respondent's sense of self.

R02 'Transactional analysis for teachers (2002) and the realisation of my own approaches in human interaction. Understanding how my sense of self and my transactional position has negatively influenced personal and professional situations'

R15 'I found the unconscious bias course I did through xxxxx Council a couple of years ago really enlightening because it made me have a serious reflection on my own bias and also my experience of others having an unconscious bias towards me and gave me a better understanding of how I come across to others as well as understanding my own unconscious bias.'

Length of course and time away from work

Approved Mental Health Professional (or Approved Social Worker) training was mentioned four times for having afforded time away from work to focus on learning.

R18 'The Approved Mental Professional training was an excellent learning opportunity. It allowed me to gain a greater understanding of mental health diagnosis and symptoms as well as the patient journey. It was a six-month dedicated space for learning which allowed the learner to embrace the theory and practical elements of the course.'

Q7 What influences your capacity to engage with CPD?

Q7 what influences capacity to engage with CPD	% of mentions	total mentions	no of respondents who mentioned	% of respondents who mentioned
work/time pressure	27%	45	41	

				60%
applicability to practice	15%	26	23	34%
commitment to development	14%	22	21	31%
impact of manager/employer	12%	22	19	28%
impact of trainer	10%	19	15	22%
Availability	8%	13	12	18%
Willingness to Engage	5%	11	8	12%
impact of timing	3%	5	5	7%
partner/family/friends	3%	6	5	7%
impact of others	2%	3	3	4%
HCPC registration	1%	1	1	1%
Grand Total	100%	173	153	

work and time pressure (60%)

For these respondents, CPD is another pressure on top of an already pressurised job.

R03 *'It has at times added to day to day stressors due to the increased time pressures of deadlines and academic work'*

R25 *'Work pressures - I frequently cancel/ postpone training due to needing to be in the office'*

applicability to practice (34%)

But these respondents see something helpful in the investment of their time.

R01 *'I've been able to use this to make and challenge decisions (e.g. panel, court) and support the development of practice of others'*

R62 *'Training in therapeutic methods has involved a great deal of reflection on personal and professional, which suits me and my personality generally. I feel that it has helped me to develop and progress. This is why I want to pursue this path in the future; it helps me to be a better social worker and also helps me as a person.'*

commitment to professional development (31%)

Here there is suggestion of a long-standing positive relationship with learning.

R02 *'Personal belief in the power/benefits of lifelong learning and the challenge of self-improvement'*

R53 *'I learned how to be a social worker. The qualifying course was only the start it's all the training I have done since that's taught me the skills and knowledge I've needed'*

manager/employer (31%)

For these respondents, support or lack of support from managers and colleagues is significant. This is of course about practicalities; time and finance but enthusiasm and interest of managers also features and resonates with the experiences of the interview participants for whom early relationships with parental or other figures of authority has influence over current response to CPD.

R20 *'However, there is no allowance from my employer to undertake any of the reading / write up of the CPD work I have undertaken. This is all completed in my own time and at my own cost. I understand that I am responsible for my learning as part of my SW registration - however, the xxxxxx organisation takes limited responsibility to offer me any time to complete these takes in work paid time.'*

R21 *'supportive and enthusiastic managers and colleagues*

- Regular supervisions

- Organisational level opportunities such having free access to latest research, partnership working with SW academics and joint learning programmes with other organisations such as the NHS.'

trainer (22%)

That only 22% of respondents mentioned the impact of the trainer might be seen to be surprising but triangulates the view of this study that much of the impact of the training is based upon dynamics outside of the classroom. But where the trainer is mentioned, the need to experience a positive connection chimes with the findings of the interview data where for participants with difficult early learning experiences, the presence of an interested and respectful trainer was significant.

R35 *'feeling the person is interested in me; talking 'my' language; telling me something new; stretching and challenging me'*

R55 *'If it is formal training, it is the trainer's attitude: whether they are inclusive, approachable, engaging, knowledgeable, passionate/motivated'*

willingness to engage (12%)

For these respondents, the ability to exercise control over their CPD activity is significant.

R10 *'When I have chosen it and it is relevant to my learning it has reinvigorated my practice however it is often imposed from above as a blanket and doesn't then have any follow up to see how it is taking hold'*

R68 *'I have always been very clear with my manager that I value my CPD and see it as my responsibility and right as a social worker to engage in CPD activities. in the past when I have not been able to focus on it, it has been down to my level of resilience at the time - if I have had the resources internally to engage with it because in reality it does mean additional work'*

family/partner/friends (7%)

Only 7% mentioned impact of family/friends

R28 *'as does impact on life outside work as I need to protect my 'not work' time'*

R33 *'Other life experiences have also had a big impact on me as a professional, such as having children, a personal bereavement'*

timing (7%)

Similarly, only 7% mentioned the importance of timing. These are both surprising results.

R01 *'A module on managing change and risk was well timed as I was just about to take on a management role in a new team during a time of restructure. Was fantastic opportunity to plan and reflect and learn new tools.'*

R51 *'Timing and whether I am tired from work. I work nights so I cannot engage effectively in the day following a night shift.'*

Q8 What impact has CPD had upon you?

Negative

67 out of 68 respondents answered this question and the responses were for the most part positive. Perhaps it is the three negative answers that create most curiosity

R06 *'Anxiety when being notified that the HCPC want to do CPD audit'*

R19 *'Very little'*

R27 *'Minimal as I feel it very much depends on your manager and personal motivation'*

It could be that the respondents to my questionnaire are not representative in terms of extra-curricular engagement and that a broader sample might find a higher proportion of negative comments. But it is interesting that responses to a shared experience can be expressed in such a polarised way and suggests that response has more to do with the social worker on the receiving end rather than the concept of CPD or the opportunity on offer.

These examples of other answers are more typical of the responses.

added confidence (16%)

R32 *'Increased my knowledge, skills and confidence'*

R05 *'Confidence in practice. Opened doors to allow me to further develop myself, share my knowledge and learning with others. Networking is a great benefit and being able to gain insight into how other LA's may be practising or approaching situations. Made me feel as though my LA do see a benefit in upskilling their workforce and place value on me on a practitioner.'*

R05's reference to being valued personifies the local authority and suggests again the need for a benign and interested figure of authority.

more current and research aware (16%)

These answers suggest an enthusiastic response to the offer of new knowledge and understanding.

R36 *'Dramatic. I keep having my way of thinking and working challenged as new information and ideas come out'*

R46 *'Massive - there is always more to learn. I also deliver training and have changed some of my content as a result of learning from colleagues and formal CPD. I think it keeps my practice fresh and my mind active.'*

help with reflection (15%)

R15 *'... it gives me time to reflect and it improves my morale and passion for my job as it gives me a chance to develop my skills and reflect on my experiences.'*

R34 *'Having the time to step away from the "day job" and looking at things from a new perspective has always been a positive of CPD for me, it's about having the time and space to explore the impact of our role, and the possibilities for improvement'*

enabled a shift in role (15%)

R12 *CPD has helped me grow first as a SW practitioner in a frontline Child Protection team then into a more strategic managerial role.*

R38 *It invigorates me-helps me stay passionate about the job I do. It has helped me see social work as wider than just front line work. It has helped me develop skills in other areas eg supporting students and newly qualified social workers and ultimately helped me make decisions about progression in my career.*

Responses from Questionnaire to main Research Questions

Data gleaned from the two parts of this study differ significantly and the reasons for this are evident; questionnaire respondents were asked specific open and closed questions. Even where the questions were open, the direction of travel was set by the question and there

was no explicit invitation to reflect further. Although it has been established there were connections between the researcher and some of the respondents, there was no physical connection at the time of the questionnaire or indeed about the questionnaire. Even where email addresses were included as part of an offer to take part in interviews, the questionnaire data was treated as anonymous and for the purpose of analysis, no connection was made between the data and identifying email. The interviews, however, were relationship based; the connection between researcher and researched influenced the participant's ability to free associate and speak openly. The interviews took between 1 and 1.5 hours and participants were invited to contact again should they wish.

But the questionnaire data also brings unanticipated depth. Whilst the data brings statistical indications of the form and subjects of CPD, it also paints a picture of how CPD is viewed and valued by social workers and raises important questions about where the responsibility for CPD should lie. Applying Hollway's (2001) suggestion of respondents as defended subjects invites deeper analysis of the responses to open questions. This offers some helpful triangulation to the themes raised in the interviews.

Universal to questionnaire and interview subjects is that they were largely positive, even affectionate about CPD

R15 *'I love CPD activities and find when I go on training or undertake a course I am interested in it gives me time to reflect and it improves my morale and passion for my job as it gives me a chance to develop my skills and reflect on my experiences.'*

Aysun says

'It feels lovely. (laughs). I feel enlightened. I realise I can be quite erm... 'ooh, I wanna learn this, I wanna learn that' all over the place like monkey you know, jumping from one end to the other.'

In the face of transactional social work with limited opportunity to reflect, CPD might offer the depth and opportunity for development that might be missing elsewhere but this can also lead to feelings of being let down when support is not forthcoming from employers.

R15 *'... it can be disheartening when things I am interested in are not financed and can make me lose interest in CPD as I don't feel I have autonomy for self-directed learning and development. Also I find at times I am cautious about agreeing to do things due to the impact on my time when I already feel I don't have enough time to manage my work load and CPD on top can feel overwhelming...'*

And similarly, Aysun adds

'So, if you want me to take on my professional development, you know, do my learning myself, are you still gonna give me the same time as you would for formal training? I don't know. Nobody answers that question.'

R15 and Aysun highlight a tension between understanding of the importance of CPD but ambiguity over where its ownership might lie. There is a reluctance to allow CPD to encroach upon their own time. R29 describes this as protecting 'not work' time as if it is under attack.

The questionnaire does not clarify whether social workers see a difference between the CPD their employer needs them to complete in order to fulfil statutory functions ie legal literacy and safeguarding and the CPD social workers might need in order to develop their uniquely social work perspective on those functions ie reflective supervision or research awareness. But there seems to be a baseline expectation that employers will provide CPD opportunities as well as the time to engage with these. It may be stretching a point too far to note the mirroring in which people supported by social workers might have expectations of what can be provided whereas the reality is that actual provision is increasingly shaved back to statutory responsibility only. Where citizens want more than the most basic of support, they increasingly need to look to their own resources to find this. Just as the state will only pick up statutory tasks, as local authority employer, it seems its CPD offer is increasingly in safeguarding, mental health and other statutory functions.

Beddoe (2009) writes about 'learning organisations' who prescribe the learning required of their staff, thus restricting the development of knowledge; if we only learn what the organisation tells us we need to know she says, there is no scope for new thought to be brought into an organisation. So an organisation teaches its staff how to do not how to think; it develops the knowledge base and not the potential. This is obviously restrictive for the potential of organisation and worker but might also be a defensive move by an organisation itself under seige of increasing expectation and decreasing resource. In writing about the experience of CPD, R66 may suggest just such a disincentive for employers to offer broader CPD

'I feel it has helped me gain more confidence, in particular the confidence to challenge aspects of the profession I feel have moved away from the core values of social work.'; it may be threatening for an employer to support a workforce of bolshie social workers who think for themselves.

If recognising the need to employ skilled social workers to complete statutory functions, is it also the responsibility of employers to provide opportunities for these professionals to develop their thinking or is it the responsibility of the professionals to seek this out for themselves and make commitment from their own resources to develop their professional ability?

This tension is indicated further in the questionnaires as in considering what impacts ability to engage with CPD, support of managers is mentioned more times (28%) than the skills of the trainer (22%). Perhaps both sets of responses suggest that for these respondents, there is a need for containment; social workers need to be practically supported by their managers but they also need to know there is interest, recognition and support for what they are doing; R05 wrote

'Made me feel as though my LA do see a benefit in upskilling their workforce and place value on me on a practitioner.'

showing the importance of support for CPD on the relationship between practitioner and employer. Similarly, trainers need to know their subject and how to hold a class but they also need to show interest and connection with their students. The questionnaire responses

suggest a need for social workers to be seen and recognised in their development. The interview data suggests a connection between this and the primal responses to learning situations indicated by the interviewees; when subjecting themselves to the vulnerability of learning, social workers revert back to the dependency patterns established as children and where there was a need for an authority figure to take an interest and show support, this is replicated as adults.

Q1 how do biographical influences affect our approach to CPD? Questionnaire response

Only one questionnaire respondent referred to the impact of home life to work life.

R33 'Other life experiences have also had a big impact on me as a professional, such as having children, a personal bereavement'

On one level the fact that only one respondent refers to this contradicts a long-held assumption of the researcher but perhaps the interview data, which brings childhood experiences and the existence of an internal voice to the fore, offers an explanation for this; that it is not the challenge of life events but the message of one's internal voice about capacity to deal with them that impacts an ability to engage with CPD.

There was little in the answers to the written questionnaire that directly addressed the question of biographical influence although there was evidence in the answers of identifiable mindset.

R01 frames their experiences in a consistently positive light

'Most highly significant is my first manager who supported and challenged me (and was a huge advocate of cpd so allowed me to take time to try new things and pushed me to keep doing modules towards an MA in advanced SW practice).

I have been lucky enough to work for a LA who work closely with the local university around formal CPD and ive had access to great teaching and research.

Twitter has really helped!

And an understanding partner.'

Whereas R15's experience is one of disappointment and resultant caution

'I like to do courses I am interested in which is really difficult with my employer as I have requested a couple of times funding to go to a course on grief and a grief conference but my manager at the time declined it as it was not seen to benefit my role so this impacted my ability to engage in CPD as I don't have the money to finance on my own. I also would love to be able to learn sign language or Makaton because I think it would be better not to have interpreters but again, I can't do this due to funding. I think it can be disheartening when things I am interested in are not financed and can make me lose interest in CPD as I don't feel I have autonomy for self-directed learning and development. Also I find at times I am cautious about agreeing to do things due to the impact on my time when I already feel I don't

have enough time to manage my work load and CPD on top can feel overwhelming as I have found managers state it is a choice to do CPD and there isn't a reduction in case load for this, which makes it hard.'

R28 suggests a positive but realistic view

'Mostly I have to source my own CPD now because there is no structure in place when you've taken all the 'basic' courses offered. So I fund myself and find my own things to do, sometimes in my own time. I try to make sure that I'm reading and growing even when things aren't facilitated. Workload makes a big difference as does impact on life outside work as I need to protect my 'not work' time.'

It is an obvious limitation of the questionnaire that I have no context and can only hypothesise on the more general approach to CPD of each of these respondents but if R01, 15 and 28's responses are also driven by inner voices, it may be that R01 experienced active encouragement as a child, R15 may have felt let down by primary figures in their life and R28 may have been encouraged to independence and pragmatism.

Q.2 What internal conditions appear to impact our ability to engage with CPD? Response to Questionnaire

Again, the lack of context makes it difficult to more than speculate about the fuller meaning of these responses. Also, these answers may have been considered and corrected before submission so may be more self-conscious and guarded than the free association narratives offered in the interviews. Nonetheless, the answers may offer clues to the internal states of mind of the respondents.

In answer to the question 'What influences your capacity to engage with CPD?', there was indication of a will to develop;

R02 *'Personal belief in the power/benefits of lifelong learning and the challenge of self-improvement.'*

R08 *'Drive to learn and develop in my role'*

R11 *'Wanting to progress within my career and achieve the best I can'*

R21 shows how both professional and private factors can influence their capacity;

- '- satisfying personal life*
- supportive and enthusiastic managers and colleagues*
- Regular supervisions*
- Organisational level opportunities such having free access to latest research, partnership working with SW academics and joint learning programmes with other organisations such as the NHS.*
- heavy workload*
- occasional moments of burn out*
- unwise topdown implementations of service delivery*

- limited annual leave entitlements
- Problems in private life'

R23 describes being too busy with work to be able to consider any benefits of CPD

'The time restraints of my every day job. I feel too stressed just managing my case load, then having to write and document my learning on top of this is very stressful.'

But R33, although recognising the impact of personal events on capacity to engage with CPD, is able to use their manager for support

'My current supervisor makes thoughtful comments and questions, I have learnt a huge amount from him, more than I learnt from other supervisors in the past. Other life experiences have also had a big impact on me as a professional, such as having children, a personal bereavement.'

R66 recognises the value of their own curiosity

'On a personal level, I feel I am helped by the fact that I am naturally curious and interested, I enjoy academic study and I seek to understand things'

R68 seems to be able to own their response to CPD, recognising its demands but also the value of meeting these whenever the necessary personal resources are available

'I have always been very clear with my manager that I value my CPD and see it as my responsibility and right as a social worker to engage in CPD activities. in the past when I have not been able to focus on it, it has been down to my level of resilience at the time - if I have had the resources internally to engage with it because in reality it does mean additional work.'

Q3 How does it feel to learn? Questionnaire Response

The questionnaire answers are limited on the feeling of learning but more fruitful on how it feels to have learnt. To this, they suggest an overwhelmingly positive response.

R05 *'Confidence in practice. Opened doors to allow me to further develop myself, share my knowledge and learning with others. Networking is a great benefit and being able to gain insight into how other LA's may be practising or approaching situations. Made me feel as though my LA do see a benefit in upskilling their workforce and place value on me on a practitioner.'*

R13 *'At its best, it has profoundly shifted my thinking and approaches to the work that I do.'*

R30 *'It engages me in my work and reinvigorates my practice'*

R49 *'It has made me more confident and developed my levels of professional curiosity. It has sustained my energy levels and avoided me becoming complacent. I enjoy learning and sharing what I learn with others.'*

R50 *'I am constantly re-invigorated by CPD - I do not think I would be able to do my job without conscience attention to CPD.'*

This is in part to do with the ability of the teacher to connect

R35 *'..... feeling the person is interested in me; talking 'my' language; telling me something new; stretching and challenging me'*

R55 *'If it is formal training, it is the trainer's attitude: whether they are inclusive, approachable, engaging, knowledgeable, passionate/motivated'*

This can go either way

R33 *'If the training day is slow involving a lot of listening I can find it hard to concentrate.'*

But is also to do with whether the respondent considers the subject to be of interest and relevance to them

R10 *'When I have chosen it and it is relevant to my learning it has reinvigorated my practice however it is often imposed from above as a blanket and doesn't then have any follow up to see how it is taking hold'*

R61 *'Sometimes I have found it irritating as it has been expected but not felt meaningful - an example being an NVQ course I did for Substance Misuse Practitioners'*

But there is recognition that the experience of learning can be impacted by other dynamics

R55 *'If I am shadowing someone or I am on a course: the dynamics between me and the person or the group, e.g. the attitude the person takes towards their job and the clients they work with; or is the energy within the group a negative one, where people are using the day to offload any gripes they have with the organisation or their job role (bringing up problem areas that could be improved upon can be interesting and can be useful, but sometimes it doesn't feel that it is being brought up in a productive way, there is a resistance to any change or learning and a very negative attitude, where any issues raised are purely about complaining and portraying themselves as knowledgeable and that they have 'seen it all before'*

The questionnaire data is helpful for triangulation, but conscious, written responses are unlikely to be the same as unconscious responses that surface when given free reign for expression so whilst the potential for further interpretation of the questionnaire responses is more limited, the quality of the interview data invites deeper analysis.

<div><div><div>The Tavistock and Portman</div><div>NHS</div><div>NHS Foundation Trust</div></div></div> <div><p>‘Emotional Experience of CPD for Social Workers’ Information Sheet</p><p>You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information.</p><p>What is the purpose of the study? The study will examine the emotional experience of continuing professional development (CPD) for social workers. I am seeking to understand why some CPD candidates connect and engage with the learning whilst others remain less affected or even untouched by the experience.</p><p>There are two parts to the study; the first is a questionnaire that will offer baseline information and also will inform the question that I use for the second part of the study which is an interview.</p><p>There will be at least 30 social workers taking part in the questionnaire but only eight will participate in the interview element of the study.</p><p>You have expressed an interest in taking part in the questionnaire.</p><p>Why have I been invited to participate?</p><p>You have been invited to participate because you are a registered social worker in England with more than two years post qualified experience and have expressed an interest in participating in this study.</p><p>Do I have to take part?</p></div>

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. However, if publications or reports have already been disseminated based on your data, these cannot be withdrawn.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to complete and return a questionnaire. This is likely to take between 30-45 minutes.

Your answers will be collated with those of other participants and will be aggregated and analysed. You will not be individually identifiable in any reports or publications from this research.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Meaningful responses to my questions will help the social work profession make decisions about how to enable and encourage social workers to engage in further learning. This is important for social work in terms of the

effectiveness of the workforce

survival of the individual social worker who needs support and containment as well as theoretical elements of CPD if to face and process difficult work

credibility and sustainability of social work as a profession

It may be that taking this time to think about your experience of CPD will also help you to focus on what is important and helpful to you in planning your professional development.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

Research data will be kept securely at all times.

All information collected about you will be kept confidential and will be stored under encryption.

Data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in electronic form for a period of ten years after the completion of this research project.

What should I do if I want to take part?

Completing this questionnaire will serve as confirmation that you 'opt in' to this study.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will form the basis of my doctoral thesis and further publication in the form of articles and presentations.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I am conducting this research as a candidate on the Professional Doctorate in Social Work and Social Care at The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. This programme is validated by The University of Essex.

Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been approved by the Tavistock and Portman Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to ask me any more about this study or need to contact me in future, please do so at tmoore@tavi-port.nhs.uk and if you would like to contact my supervisor, Dr Forbes can be contacted at dlforbes51@virginmedia.com.

Concerns

Should you have any concerns about my conduct as researcher or any other aspect of this research project, you should contact Dr Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance at The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. academicquality@tavi-port.nhs.uk

Statement of Consent

Participation in the questionnaire on the link below will confirm your consent to the following:

to participate in the research project, 'Emotional experience of CPD for social workers' being carried out by Tanya Moore
agreement has been given voluntarily and without coercion
you have been given full information about the study and contact details of the researcher.
you have read and understood the information provided above
you have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and your participation in it

Thank you very much for expressing an interest in this research. Should you decide to participate, you will find the questionnaire on the link [here](#).

I do hope that you find the experience to be interesting and useful.

Tanya Moore

The Tavistock and Portman



NHS Foundation Trust

'Emotional Experience of CPD for Social Workers' Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information.

What is the purpose of the study?

The study will examine the emotional experience of continuing professional development (CPD) for social workers. I am seeking to understand why some CPD candidates connect and engage with the learning whilst others remain less affected or even untouched by the experience.

There are two parts to the study; the first is a questionnaire that will offer baseline information and also will inform the question that I use for the second part of the study which is an interview.

There will be at least 30 social workers taking part in the questionnaire but only eight will participate in the interview element of the study.
You have expressed an interest in taking part in the interview.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate because you are a registered social worker in England with more than two years post qualified experience and have expressed an interest in participating in this study.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. However, if publications or reports have already been disseminated based on your data, these cannot be withdrawn.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to come to The Tavistock clinic up to two times to be interviewed about your experience of CPD. I will conduct the interviews which will last approximately 1.5 hours. nb, timing will be tested at the pilot stage.

The interview will be audio recorded and your answers will be collated with those of other participants and will be analysed. You will not be individually identifiable in any reports or publications from this research.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Meaningful responses to my research questions will help the social work profession make decisions about how to enable and encourage social workers to engage in further learning. This is important for social work in terms of the

effectiveness of the workforce

survival of the individual social worker who needs support and containment as well as theoretical elements of CPD if to face and process difficult work

credibility and sustainability of social work as a profession

It may be that taking this time to think about your experience of CPD will also help you to focus on what is important and helpful to you in planning your professional development.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

Research data will be kept securely at all times.

Interviews will be transcribed by me. All information collected about you will be kept confidential and will be stored under encryption accessible only to me.

There are however, limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

Audio recordings will be kept until the end of the project but transcriptions and other data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in electronic form for a period of ten years after the completion of this research project.

What should I do if I want to take part?

Returning the Interview Consent form will serve as confirmation that you 'opt in' to this part of the study.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will form the basis of my doctoral thesis and further publication in the form of articles and presentations.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I am conducting this research as a candidate on the Professional Doctorate in Advanced Practice and Research (Social Work and Social Care) at The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. This programme is validated by The University of Essex.

Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been approved by the Tavistock and Portman Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to ask me any more about this study or need to contact me in future, please do so at tanya.moore@btopenworld.com and if you would like to contact my supervisor, Dr Forbes can be contacted at dlforbes51@virginmedia.com.

Concerns

Should you have any concerns about my conduct as researcher or any other aspect of this research project, you should contact Dr Simon Carrington, Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance at The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. academicquality@taviport.nhs.uk

Thank you very much for expressing an interest in this research. Should you decide to participate, I do hope that you find the experience to be interesting and useful.

Tanya Moore

The Tavistock and Portman



NHS Foundation Trust

Participant Consent form for Research Project: Emotional Experience of CPD for social workers

Dear Participant,

This research is being carried out by me, under the supervision of Dr David Forbes and Professor Andrew Cooper.

I am investigating the emotional experience of continuing professional development (CPD) for social workers; why it is that some CPD candidates connect and engage with the learning experience whilst others remain less affected or even untouched by the experience.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed by me and the answers which you provide will be recorded through audio recording as well as notes taken by me.

All information collected will be kept securely and will only be accessible by me and my supervisor but the confidentiality of the information provided is subject to legal limitations in data confidentiality and there are limitations in confidentiality where disclosure of imminent harm to self and/or others may occur.

Data will be anonymised and if the data you provide is used in any publications or reports then a participant number or pseudonym will be used and identifying details will be removed. A list may be kept linking participant numbers or pseudonyms to names, but this will be kept securely and will only be accessible by myself and my supervisor.

A copy of the information which I record about you, but not other participants, will be provided, free of charge, on request.

The results of this study will form the basis of my doctoral thesis and further publication in the form of articles and presentations.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving reasons and without penalty, even after the data have been collected. However, if publications or reports have already been disseminated based on this data, these cannot be withdrawn.

I would be very grateful for your participation in this study. If you need to contact me in future, please do so at tanya.moore@btopenworld.com and if you would like to contact my supervisor, Dr Forbes can be contacted at dlforbes51@virginmedia.com.

Many thanks
Tanya

<u>Statement of Consent</u>	<u>Please initial each box</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I agree to participate in the research project, Emotional Experience of CPD for social workers' being carried out by Tanya Moore 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This agreement has been given voluntarily and without coercion. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have been given full information about the study and contact details of the researcher. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have read and understood the information provided above 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research and my participation in it. 	

Participant's signature

Date

Appendix 3

Excerpts of text sent to Jackie and Tina for triangulation

Jackie is 41-50 years. She is Black, British Caribbean and has been practising as a social worker for 7 years.

Jackie works in a secure forensic hospital but at the time of interview, was working her notice before moving on to a new job as a university social work lecturer. Jackie is a fellow student on my doctoral course. She originally answered my request for colleagues to be interviewed as a trial run but on the suggestion of my tutor, also agreed that if the interview was successful in terms of eliciting meaningful data, her data could be used as part of my study.

Because she was in her final few days at work, I travelled to Jackie's place of work instead of her coming to The Tavistock. She collected me from the station, drove me to the hospital and took me through the complicated security arrangements of keys and codes to get me inside.

At the beginning of interview, I had a sense of Jackie speaking in a guarded manner, as if she was saying what she thought she was meant to say. Later in the interview, she talked about her father being a good person 'even when no one was looking'. I was struck by this idea and related it to Jackie herself. When she spoke about her Christian faith, I could see that for Jackie, someone is always looking; Jesus is always aware of what she is doing so her life must have constant purpose and intention.

Jackie's story is of being born to Windrush generation parents who having not received the welcome they had been promised in the UK, worked to establish their own Caribbean community. Jackie's language is consistently polite and respectful but her school experience sounds racist in its failure to see any potential in her as a young black girl. Her family's story is one of successful resilience and a determination to see the best in others. I felt emotional at the end of her interview; partly gratitude to her for having shared her story and partly connecting to her as a mother of boys and seeing the power of her story as the legacy she says she wishes to leave.

Jackie describes her family as working class but with higher standards. School didn't challenge and expected very little from her. Jackie has five sisters and as teenagers, she says they related to the issues of hierarchy and status explored by Jane Austen in *Pride and Prejudice*.

'she was a bit ahead of her time in what she wrote. She talked about hierarchy of the day, you know, the status factor. She wrote in I think quite a forward-thinking way about women and their inability to move beyond what society had set for them and we understood how, you know, those, those, those ladies in Pride and Prejudice were just as trapped as people in the lower classes

we kind of maybe also parallel as there was like 6 of us, yes, 6 girls and 5 of them, the Bennet girls in Pride and Prejudice and you know, it was very interesting, we kind of made these comparisons because even though we were in a kind of working class family, our standards weren't working class in terms of how our parents looked at us, their expectations of us and the way they made us speak'

It may be that Jackie and her sisters were unconsciously defending themselves against the low expectations for black girls in racist Britain of the 1980s by focussing on barriers of class instead of race. But it may also be that Jackie was protecting me as a white researcher from the realities of the racism she experienced. Jackie's parent's response to these realities and barriers was to create their own opportunities and standards and Jackie recognises her parents as her first teachers and the learning to have been self-generated from home.

Jackie sees life as a journey that must be enjoyed through experience and development but also

through the leaving of a legacy. Her faith tells her we're being 'watched' and don't want to fail at this. School let her down but Jackie's family refused to allow her to sink into the unfairness of this, establishing weekend school, church and community activities as well as bible study in the evening with her sisters. Jackie watched her parents succeed in the way that mattered to them in the face of the racism and exclusion they encountered. As a result, she won't allow herself to be excluded; she chooses not to see it and brings out the best in those around her by expecting the best.

Jackie's parents wouldn't allow her to be a victim to the racist attitudes of the school and instead of talking about what school didn't do for her, Jackie speaks with pride about the Saturday schools run by the Caribbean churches. Here, standards were high, children were expected to work hard and challenge themselves academically and socially. That message seems to be deeply implanted in Jackie who doesn't dwell on the very evident discrimination she experienced at school. Instead, she talks about the compassion and support she has received from those who have taken interest and invested time and thought into her development.

Jackie's father was a pastor in the Protestant Evangelical church that her family attended twice every Sunday. Her parents both '*cared for others when people weren't looking*' and continued to help others long into retirement. Jackie sees both her mother and father as lifelong role models.

'My father was someone who was always in the limelight as he was a pastor..... It was that kind of values about helping and serving and being on the world to do good for others. So, you're not just here to do good for yourself. I think those kinds of values were very clear in my early life. And my father, he's gone now god bless him but even after he er, retired, he was still in, even in his late 60s, he was driving for the disabled association. He never sat down, he refused to not contribute to the works and to others and for me, that's social work values and that's where I learned those. My mother now in her late 70s, still goes to visit people who are in mental health hospitals, some of her friends as frail as she is, she's still doing that now

So you can see, I've just had lifelong examples..... I'm a great believer in legacy and I think that my father left an awesome one for us in that sense. Um, then if you're gonna be here, do some good for someone. If you're gonna live here, you know, if you're gonna live this life, well one of the things he said to me, well he said to all of us was 'the challenge of life is to live it'. And I thought that was really powerful, a very powerful statement and he was, like I said, someone er, a person of principle of value.'

Jackie's parents came to the UK from the Caribbean and didn't get the welcome, even in the church that they expected so they created their own churches for black congregants. It was the church schools that compensated for the structural racism and neglect that Jackie experienced in her state school.

'Caribbean churches ran Saturday schools and the level was kind of grammar level. Grammar school. It was good, really high education and there was also, what was lacking in the school for particular people who looked like me, I think that's the nicest way to say it, there was no expectation of me. But certainly, at home, my parents had an expectation of me. Academically, they had an expectation of me in terms of the person I was becoming. There was an expectation in terms of how I lived my life.'

Jackie's parent's response to the racism and exclusion they faced on arrival in the UK was to do it for themselves; create their own churches, educate their own children. This seems to have been the blueprint for Jackie's '10% from others, 90% from yourself' approach to life. It's this ingrained

positivity and self-reliance that seems to have protected Jackie from the reality of her school.

'It's funny, I've never even talked about it quite like this but I'm understanding that that's why it just didn't have a major place for me um... I mean some of my teachers were drunk half the time I mean they'd come to school smelling of alcohol. We had one teacher who called us all a bunch of slags. I mean we had it all. It was the east end, what do you want? And so, school was school. You know, this very strange place that I'd go to 5 days a week. Don't much like the teachers. They don't much like me. But I have a life outside of there and um, it was full. I don't feel like I'm missing anything. If anything, school was an interference, it was interference in my real life and that's why it didn't really play a big. It's really funny, it's quite reflective now to think of it but no, I had everything I needed, even in terms of academia, even in terms of being challenged, I had all of that.'

Jackie learned early in life that she needed to be self-sustaining.

'I think you have to take charge of your own development, I don't think you can necessarily come in to your role and expect your manager or any one manager or any place to say 'this is how we can develop you'. I think you need to come in knowing where you want to go. I always say this to students; you have to be intentional about what you want to do. Otherwise, you'll sit for years in a role. You'll do a good job, but you'll be there for 10 years before you even know what happened at that time. Em, so you come in thinking about 'where do I go next?', before you've even started the job so that you have a plan.'

Jackie's approach has created a momentum that has taken her from her initial Access course through to study for a doctorate.

'The doctorate was extremely challenging, and I had no idea whether I could do it. no idea. I'm not gonna lie. No idea. It's like I had no idea whether I could do the degree. And so, to come out with a 1st class degree, I was like 'there must be something there 'and so, each thing I did just gave me the gumption to do more. Almost the audacity to say 'ok, I'm gonna try that then I'm gonna try this' so, I did that. That seemed to work out already so I'm gonna try this. So that's been my experience; just that developing as a person and as a practitioner, it's really fed into my whole life, my whole journey.'

Opportunities were not given to Jackie or her family so as part of the Caribbean community in East London, they had to create them for themselves. This message was clearly stated to Jackie by her parents and her community. Here she speaks of passing on this message to her sons.

'I told my son we do 10% learning in the class and 90% is what we do on our own so the majority of our learning is commanded by ourselves. We run that. So, then it's not the teacher or the course. So, the onus then isn't on that thing. The structured stuff is there to give you a guide, so ok these are the lines that you should work along professionally, legislatively, if that's a word and the rest you do yourself, the rest you should go out and get yourself. You should always be adding to that, you should be doing the 90% absolutely.'

Jackie identifies pivotal points in her life where learning from others has stirred significant understanding and shifts in her perspective. She actively seeks learning and has positioned herself so to learn from others. This may be sitting next to social workers at lunchtime to learn from their conversations or studying for a doctorate alongside senior managers so coming to understand the context within which they work.

'I took time to sit with the other social workers at lunchtime and to hear about how they were

progressing professionally how they managed the difficult cases, how they managed without the necessary supervision. You know, how they used peer supervision, how they co-mentored each other. And I, it was again, that very early time where I sat and I listened to child protection social workers that I think help me steer me in the right direction, helped me to understand that ok, I'm going to need to have supports for myself in the right place. I cannot just rely on my managers because my managers have pressures of their own.'

This wasn't a new message for Jackie; she'd already been hearing this from her own parents throughout her life. Whether other people with different internal messages would have taken the same learning from the social workers' lunchtime gatherings as Jackie can only be speculated but it's clear that for Jackie, this experience confirmed the understanding that was already imprinted by the voice of her parents.

'It wasn't that I was this super focused person because seriously, I wasn't. it's because I had people whom were willing to come alongside me and share not just their successes but their failures, what went wrong and how they overcame that em, and that's what builds strength and we need that in our profession

I found that the people I was being taught by as well, were again, committed to what they were doing. I don't know if I've had a lovely experience, if I've got, you know, rose tinted glasses. But that's what I've found, I've found that help was there if you looked for it.'

We can't know whether Jackie has just been lucky in meeting such helpful people, whether her interpretation of the way people respond to her is an extended reaction formation in which she re-casts the responses of people around her to compensate for the racist neglect she experienced at school or whether, as my own experience of Jackie suggests, an even more interesting dynamic is at play. My response to Jackie has always been to want to help her and as an experienced lecturer while Jackie is new to teaching, there have been many opportunities for me to do this which I have willingly seized. It may be that I am experiencing a powerful counter transference in which I too respond to Jackie's inner voice telling her she must find what she needs. Help is there if you look for it and just as Jackie's parents promised her, I am happy to be available to give it.

In this story, Jackie shows how the faith and values instilled in her enable her to see learning opportunities in unexpected places. This helps to illustrate Jackie's experience that people are so willing to support her; this is what she sees.

'I always believed and again, was taught this, I always believed you learn from your elders, you respect them and they have so much to teach you so it's good to just sit and hear their stories and there was this older gentleman, Caucasian gentleman called Charlie who used to sit at the bottom of our road and he was errr a single amputee so he had lost one of his legs, and he used to sit and, this was back in the day when you could, so, it was east London, he would sit at the door with his door open and you could do this, it was safe, it was like late 80s, it was ok to do this then and again, I would see him just sitting there and he looked so lonely and my heart, my little heart strings, I'm like, how can I help him and not knowing he had so much more to teach me, I remember going to see him and sitting with him... he must have been in his 80s and he told me about 2nd world war and his time in Italy and just how much I learned from him. I just sat and listened to him. I did all these things when I was, well I must have been 18. Even my older sister would have been thinking 'what's she doing? What's she doing/ sitting at the bottom of the road with Charlie. But I learned that you can learn from these people. They have more to teach you than you can ever give them you might go in with the attitude that you're there to help but you end up finding that you're being helped yourself. And that's what I find with CPD that you should stay a virtual student because it keeps you humble, it

keeps you open. It keeps you, well I suppose I don't know how it keeps you, it depends how you look at it. Em, always thinking about how you can make that difference, even if it's a tiny one and that sometimes the tiny, tiny differences are the bigger ones. Em, so yeah, that's where it um, is still continuing, yeah, that's why I set off on this continuous journey but yeah, without a doubt, my faith is a bedrock for all of what I do. Um, yeah, cause otherwise, what we here for? (laugh) What we here for? What just um, money and live in nice houses. All of that's great. All of that's great. I don't knock any of that but yeah, we've got to leave something for our children and legacy is not just about money, it should be about values, about the way a person has lived their life.'

All learning is good learning for Jackie and everything is learning. This is the message that was installed in her as a child and is the legacy she intends to leave for her own children.

Tina is 51-60 years. She is White British and has been practising as a social worker for 4 years. Previously, she had been successful in a completely different career but took the opportunity to re-train when it arose.

Tina is a fellow student on my doctoral course. She also answered my request to be a 'trial run' whose data would be used if the interview went to plan. We spent the first two years of our course together but Tina had taken this year as a 'rest' while she changed jobs so we were no longer at the same stage. Before start of her interview, Tina made it clear that she would be coming back to the course in September as her job situation is now settled. We are a small group and I was pleased to hear this.

Tina's was my first interview. Before the interview, I was excited and nervous with a worry about technology and whether this would let me down. I spent the minutes before Tina arrived downloading an app to back up my digital recorder.

Tina came straight to the room a few minutes before I was due to go and find her in reception. I hadn't doubted she would come but was very pleased to see her. Tina said she hadn't thought much about doing the interview beforehand but once on the train, had become unaccountably nervous. We laughed about me transmitting my nerves to her and talked about her being a pilot and my gratitude.

Tina looked away from me throughout the interview. I was aware of the significance of us being at The Tavistock as this is where Tina has studied but also because the room we were in is often used as a therapy room.

At the end of interview, Tina said she couldn't look at me whilst talking; it was too personal. She hadn't expected thinking about CPD to be such an emotional process, particularly when thinking about her own reasons for pursuing CPD and when talking about her husband. Tina said she was surprised at the things that had come into her head but one thing was clear; she was going to go home tonight and thank her husband for supporting her through her MA and re-training.

Tina questions her internal voice.

'I wonder why I am so driven to try and continue to learn; why I don't feel so confident. And I wonder whether that is because you know, I don't come from a background or a family where people were encouraged to learn or even advance on very much It was almost as though, well get a secure job then just stay there and that's be it. I don't think from any malicious point of view that that was suggested; that's just how things were I've been lucky but that encouragement to learn, thinking about it, has been quite an issue in my life. And I've been trying to prove myself to other people. I am a bit concerned about what other people think ... '

Despite her high academic achievements, Tina doesn't recognise herself as part of what she sees as an exclusive group of bright people; her internal voice seems to tell her she's an imposter. The low expectations of her family and her school have shaped her view of self; she's an uninvited guest at a gathering of gifted and talented folk but still determined to get more out of learning and of life and continues to push herself to develop and re-script her childhood experience.

Tina is aware of the randomness of luck; bad fortune in going to a low aspirational school, good fortune in meeting her husband who supports her aspirations and good news in her redundancy from her first career meaning no worry about bills when training for her second career as a social worker. Tina wants to do and be the best she can in social work. She's aware and curious about her drive to learn but also her lack of confidence. Tina regrets that she wasn't pushed by her family or school and she's now determined to re-script this so is working hard to seize as much as she can in terms of development and growth. Tina feels she was put into a box at an early age by school as well as by her family's lack of ambition and says she's determined to prove those people wrong.

'I don't think that I can be alone in being driven to try and improve myself or learn..... Even though or perhaps because this wasn't something that was part of the culture of my family or upbringing. Em, I went to very ordinary well, my primary school was a very ordinary school but my secondary school, there was, it was assumed that people had a lack of ambition to do things So perhaps I'm driven by I've had to prove people wrong; you know it, isn't the case; people can learn. We can all change, we can progress'

Although Tina says little about her own family, there are clues about her family life in the way she describes her husband's. His was a nurturing family full of positive, happy support;

'I'm very, very lucky. I'm married to such a lovely man who isn't at all concerned about what other people think, You know, he's a kind person but he wouldn't be at all concerned if people didn't think he could afford a posh car or was academically successful. He had tremendous, wonderful, wonderful parents, they were very into sport. He was brought up in this wonderful family. They were so happy; their default was smiling and laughing and he's just got one sister so two children were brought up in this big house where their grandma lived with them, they were just sort of so kind and supportive and ... they were always ... even sort of family tragedies were dealt with and they would all just support each other really well so both he and his sister have grown to be adults who really can cope with dreadful family tragedies and still remain sort of very, you know decent and loving people. So, em, he's very different to me. His memories of his childhood are overwhelmingly happy ones of playing cricket and holidays and going out, you know, they'd always going fishing and things, so you know, his childhood is quite a contrast to mine where you know, I don't remember, my memories of childhood really aren't lots of happy days and things.'

Tina's description of her husband's family seems to reinforce her sense that there is a better way and she has missed it. She seems disappointed that her family didn't encourage her to develop in the way she would have liked and envious of her husband's supportive background. If this is the case, Tina's success in creating a family life that's so closely aligned to the one she sees as well as shaping her study and her career in such a purposeful way, seems to be an indication that she is successfully re-scripting her own narrative in terms of her home life as well as her learning.

Tina regards herself as an outsider to what she perceives as a group of well qualified, able learners and works hard to earn herself core member status. My sense is that she doesn't feel she is there yet, despite studying for a doctorate.

'I sometimes do think that I've struggled to learn things that others seem to find so easy. I do have to take notes about things all the time em, I can't learn without doing that. That's my way of being reminded and em, to grasp something new.....'

Whereas I do work with people who seem to be able to remember things or remember things when they've been on a course without seemingly any effort. I'm a bit envious of that actually. Some people do seem to be able to learn so easily. Em ... perhaps that's just my perception. Perhaps we all have our different ways of learning or appearing to learn ... Em ...

I wonder why I am so driven to try and continue to learn; why I don't feel so confident. And I wonder whether that is because you know, I don't come from a background or a family where people were encouraged to learn or even advance on very much It was almost as though, well get a secure job then just stay there and that'll be it. I don't think from any malicious point of view that that was suggested; that's just how things were

The sense of being an outsider prevails; while growing up, Tina didn't feel part of the privileged learner set and then in her first post qualifying role, she considered that as she was in the NHS, she might not be having access to the same CPD opportunities as others. So the disadvantaged outsider feeling continued but Tina did something about it by joining a private supervision group. It was the coordinator there who suggested the doctorate. *'I thought it sounded wonderful and so, em, I applied'*. Yet the imposter feeling continues with Tina's sense that others are better equipped to study at this level than her.

Although Tina seems determined to rescript her original learning experience, it may be that she's continually replaying her experience from school; whatever the aspirations of those around her, Tina did go to university and established a good career and whatever her thoughts about her own ability, she is working in a highly regarded specialist field and is studying at level 8 but for Tina, the powerful internal pattern is established and she sees herself as less capable than the lucky clever people.

Tina also seems regretful that she wasn't pushed or encouraged more by her family. Here she reflects upon why CPD is so important to her and considers whether this is because it wasn't so highly valued in her family.

'I wonder why I am so driven to try and continue to learn; why I don't feel so confident. And I wonder whether that is because you know, I don't come from a background or a family where people were encouraged to learn or even advance on very much'

If Tina's family created an internal message that she should accept what is immediately available to her and not push herself further, she has managed to re-script this with the help of her husband who encourages her in ways that her family did not.

'He's very supportive of any study that I want to do or any time that I... I'm always reading and he's very supportive of that He would think 'oh you can do anything' he wouldn't put restrictions on himself or me.'

Perhaps having established a fulfilling personal life, Tina now feels able to focus on herself through her professional life and become the intellectually astute person she wanted to be.

'perhaps I describe myself as you know, not being open to any argument before and I like to think I was but the fact that I'm you know, open to considering things from all of the points of view and things that I thought that I'd definitely em, believed before. Now I'm more open.'

Tina's commitment to CPD seems to be fuelled by a desire to move away from her intellectually unfulfilled childhood by re-scripting her approach to learning and development

Tina also thrived on the teaching on her qualifying social work training and she seeks to replicate this in her ongoing CPD

'I do still want to think that what I'm doing is based on this good practice, good understanding. Em, Anyway for having had this wonderful experience, I think when I did go into the world of work as a social worker, I realised that many people I worked with had never had experienced that level of supervision which gave me a taste for trying to be well informed, trying to find out a training course, trying to learn from other people.'

Tina won't now allow herself to waste opportunities to develop; she came to social work later in life. People already assume that she has been practising for longer than she has because she's older. Tina sees herself as having catching up to do.

Tina wants to provide the best possible service for the people she supports

'..... that was my whole reason for training to be a social worker. I did want to support people and I do find satisfaction in it. I think there's a lot of frustrations in it but I still feel this great satisfaction when you can do a job well.'

Tina had a different career before becoming a social worker and although there were training courses and learning on the job, she didn't consider the concept of CPD until experiencing her social work training, becoming aware of the need to inform and account for decisions and recognising the impact of this on herself as a professional as well as on her clients. She says this offers her security in her practice but it may also offer security in the knowledge that she has entered a profession with a respectable knowledge base and a recognised career path; that she has become a part of the group of thoughtful educated people to which she aspired.

Tina has successfully re-scripted her relationship with learning and aspiration. She is now part of both a family and a profession where learning is valued and she is encouraged to progress. But she still locates herself outside of the group of educational achievers; the internal voice that was established within her as a child whose potential was overlooked still resonates and shapes her vision.

Tina's story is one of trying to achieve that thing she missed or was denied. Her formal education, family culture and societal influence combined all cast her as a low achiever. But Tina has worked hard to rescript this and now has a supportive husband who encourages and takes an interest in her development. Tina's husband is highly significant and now appears as the enabling environment she lacked in childhood. Her Learning rescript has been successful although her internal voice does not recognise this.